

College Composition and Communication

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Vol. V December, 1954 No. 4

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GRAMMATICAL PROPRIETIES— <i>Karl W. Dykema</i>	135
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF RHETORICAL PROPRIETIES— <i>J. E. Congleton</i>	140
SUMMARY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS— <i>James B. McMillan</i>	145
GRAMMATICAL ASSUMPTIONS— <i>Sumner Ives</i>	149
MODERN RHETORICAL DOCTRINE AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LINGUISTICS— <i>W. Nelson Francis</i>	155
GRAMMAR IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH— <i>Donald J. Lloyd</i>	162
LINGUISTICS AND THE TEACHING OF RHETORIC— <i>L. M. Myers</i>	166
NSSC NEWS— <i>Jean Malmstrom</i>	171
CCCC BULLETIN BOARD.....	173
SOME OF THE YEAR'S WORK IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION.....	175

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Historical Development of the Concept of Grammatical Proprieties¹

KARL W. DYKEMA²

Last Christmas my daughter brought me this little book as a perhaps slightly ironic gift for her pedant father. It is entitled *A Short Introduction of Grammar*, and was published "At the Theater, Oxford, 1699." Since we are going to do a lot of talking about grammar during our three sessions here, it is appropriate that we begin with a passage from a grammar. Here then are some excerpts from the Preface:

Although the very great importance of having the first Rudiments of Grammar well laid, in order to all future progress in learning, is a thing manifest in its self, and acknowledged by all sober men; (those Empiricks who have pretended to a compendious art of teaching without Rule or Method, having been abundantly confuted by their shameful misadventures:) Yet the particular Conduct of Grammatical Institution has in all times been variously discours'd, and no less diversly pursued . . . Grammar is the Sacrist, that bears the Key of Knowledge, by whom alone admittance can be had into the Temple of the Muses, and treasures of Arts; even whatever can enrich the Mind, and raise it from the level of a Barbarian and Idiot, to the dignity of an Intelligence. But this Sacrist is a severe Mistress, who being once contemned, will certainly revenge the Injury, it being evident that no Person ever yet despised Grammar, who had not his fault return'd upon him; . . . It would be observed farther that Grammar, as she is a severe Mistress, is also a coy one; and hardly admits any courtship but of the youthful votary. There are indeed many who

by great industry, have redeem'd the want of early Institution but in the performances of such, there still appears somewhat of stiffness and force; and what has more in it of Art than Nature;

I think you recognize in these words a very familiar attitude, still frequently expressed or implied in some grammars today, though not usually in quite so arresting a style. But today the grammar which is referred to is that of English; whereas the final sentences of his Preface make it clear that this author was thinking of quite other othings:

When on the other side he that begins an early Court, has greater assurances of favour; with little difficulty becomes a Denison of Rome and Athens, in whatsoever Climate he happens to be born; and makes their Languages his mother tongue; thereby obtaining a free address to all the wisdom of precedent ages, and the friendship of the Heroes of them; to treat familiarly with Xenophon and Caesar, Demosthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, or whomsoever else he chuses for an acquaintance. He first will read; then equal their Achievements; and having fill'd his head with their arts and knowledge, will crown it also with their Laurels.

Whom these temptations cannot move to study, let him throw away his book, and like an illiterate criminal perish for not reading in it; let him live a fool, and dye a brute.

And the full title of the book reads: *A Short Introduction of Grammar, Generally To Be Used: Compiled and set forth for the bringing up of all those that intend to attain to the Knowledge of the Latin Tongue.*

This book is a reprint of William Lily's famous Latin grammar with considerable annotation both of the English Introduction and the Latin grammar itself. The

¹This paper, by the Participating Chairman, and the six following papers were given at the CCCC, 1954, Spring Meeting, in St. Louis, Missouri, during the first, second, and third panel-discussion sessions on the general subject, "Modern Linguistics and the Teaching of Freshman English." Material by Professor Charles C. Fries, the eighth member of the panel, is not available for publication.

²Youngstown College.

validity of the views I have just read will be examined by some of the following speakers, who will expose them to the conclusions of linguistics. But since these views show such admiration for the "Denisons" of the ancient world, it may also be useful first to compare the attitudes expressed with those of the Greeks and Romans themselves, because the contrast is so remarkable.

Modern discussions of the attitudes of the ancients toward language are not numerous, and since I am no classicist myself, I must lean heavily on the few classicists, mostly French and German, who have discussed the matter during the last hundred years.³ The history of grammar has, perhaps understandably, been pursued by a limited number of scholars, partly, no doubt, because it is not a superficially glamorous subject, but also because the evidence is scanty and fragmentary.

It can, however, be stated that the educational institutions of Greece during the period of her glory had no place for grammar in them for the very simple reason⁴ that it had not yet been invented. An attempt to formulate a grammatical theory and terminology is apparent here and there in Plato and Aristotle, and there was apparently a good deal of grammatical theorizing in the third century B.C. But the earliest extant Greek grammar, that of Dionysius Thrax, did not appear until the second century B.C. Yet the study of grammar did not become a part of either Hellenistic or Roman education since it had been developed as a part of the Greek intellectual passion for systematic analysis and description of every significant phenomenon, not as a pedagogical device. And

it seems to have remained mainly a matter of speculation and controversy among the not inconsiderable group of thinkers who had inherited the name of grammarian from their teaching duties as instructors of reading and writing, i.e., teachers of letters.⁵

But somewhere in the development of Western culture, grammar became a tool for teaching a foreign language. Early in the sixth century Priscian used grammar to teach Latin in Constantinople;⁶ but for the most part grammar was a part of the textual analysis of the classics, of works in the Greek or Latin which was still the student's own language. Perhaps as the student's knowledge of those classical languages became more uncertain, grammar somehow was used as a means of teaching him the language itself. At any rate in early modern times it is firmly established as the foundation for the study of the classical languages, and among the earliest books printed in fifteenth century Italy are grammars of Greek and Latin.⁷

The author of the book I quoted is well aware of the ancient grammarians. He cites Priscian, Donatus, and Varrus in his notes.⁸ And it can hardly be doubted that all well-educated men of his time were aware of the classical provenience of the grammar they had studied. It must have seemed axiomatic to them that the method of learning Latin and Greek through formal grammar represented a tradition going back to the ancients themselves. The prestige of everything classical was so great, particularly in the eighteenth century, that this association of grammar with ancient literature gave it a fundamental place in educational practice.

It was against such a background that

³ Particularly H. Steinthal, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*, Berlin, 1863; Th. Benfey, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft und orientalischen Philologie in Deutschland*, München, 1869; and H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1948.

⁴ Marrou, p. 236

⁵ Marrou, p. 236

⁶ Marrou, p. 372

⁷ J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, Cambridge, 1908. Vol. 2, pp. 61, 71, 77.

⁸ A Short Introduction . . . pp. 21, 23, 28.

the vernacular began gradually to claim a place for itself in the curriculum. Inevitably a grammatical treatment of it came to be prescribed, though there are protests, like Sidney's in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, where he writes:

Another will say it wanteth Grammar. Nay truly, it hath that prayse, that it wanteth not Grammar: for Grammer it might have, but it needes it not; beeing so easie of itselfe, and so voyd of those cumbersome differences of Cases, Genders, Moodes, and Tenses, which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of Babilons curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother-tongue.⁹

But even so intelligent and emancipated an educator as Comenius, who first published his *Great Didactic* in his native Czech (1628-32), wanted to teach the children in his Vernacular School "to write . . . in accordance with the grammatical rules of the mother-tongue." (ch. 29, 6 ii.)¹⁰ Perhaps Comenius's rules for Czech would have been more than a slavish translation of Latin grammar into the vernacular, since his approach to language teaching was based on a good deal more intelligent analysis of the problem than was common in his day. Most of the grammatical analysis of the vernacular was, however, based on the already existing works which had been devised to introduce students to Latin grammatical concepts by approximating them in English translation. These works now became the foundation for grammars of the vernacular whose purpose was to prescribe the correct use of English, for example, with the same authority and simplicity as was done for Latin in the standard school grammars.

The eighteenth century grammarian of English faced enormous difficulties, of most of which he was probably unaware.

First, he was faced with the mass of material that a total living language with all its dialects presents, though of course he did not recognize that he had this problem. Second, he was totally unprepared to make an original and independent analysis of any language because he had never been confronted with the problem of analyzing a language for which no formal description existed; that is, he had no acquaintance with a methodology of linguistic analysis. Third, he was fatally handicapped by an intimate acquaintance with the concepts of classical grammar, concepts which had come to be accepted as universals, though many of them had little relevancy to English; these preconceptions also prevented him from noticing many grammatical phenomena peculiar to English. Fourth, the cultural atmosphere in which he worked tended to make him look upon English as an inferior or at best a defective language; he therefore considered himself as in duty bound to improve and—as the expression was—to ascertain the language. Fifth, he found himself in a position never enjoyed by his classical predecessors, the position of enjoying a large audience, made up principally of members of the middle class who had social aspirations. This last point is of tremendous importance because it explains how formal English grammar got itself so firmly established in the schools. For we must not forget that especially during the past century and a half a very important function of the schools has been felt to be that they should help the ambitious to push their way socially upward into a class where control of a particular variety of English was an important means of admission.

How much effect the teaching of grammar has had on the actual language habits of those who have been exposed to it during the last 200 years is a moot

⁹ Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie*, p. 70. London: A. Constable & Co., 1905.

¹⁰ J. A. Comenius, *The Great Didactic*. Translated and edited by M. W. Keating, London, 1896, p. 420.

point which deserves much fuller study than it has received. But one tremendous success the teaching of formal grammar has certainly had. It has instilled a well-nigh universal faith in its efficacy for curing all manner of linguistic ills. Like many another faith it prescribes a regimen that few of the faithful are willing to submit to. Perhaps for that very reason—for the reason that few have really tested it—the faith remains nearly as strong as ever among the people as a whole. And therefore like all attacks on a faith, those who question it are looked upon as heretics, though fortunately the punishment for grammatical heresy is somewhat milder than burning at the stake. Still, the grammarian's fate is a precarious one. Though Dante counts Donatus among the blessed, he consigns Priscian to Hell for sodomy. Professor Curtius has tried to unravel the threads of medieval tradition which moved Dante to treat the two grammarians so differently, but has been unable to discover more than a misinterpretation of Priscian's dedication of his work to a patriarch named Julian. Later writers confused this Julian with the more famous Roman emperor, Julian the Apostate, and thereby prepared the way for Priscian's damnation.¹¹ Perhaps some of you will consign us to a similar fate by interpreting our labors here as dedicated to some horrible linguistic apostasy whereas we are really dedicating ourselves to a better understanding of the true nature of language.

The eighteenth century grammarian worked, then, under almost insuperable handicaps, and were it not for the unfortunately tremendous influence his work has had we could examine it more coolly and recognize his often considerable contributions. He is certainly not to be condemned for the honesty with

which he described his purpose. Unlike many present-day grammarians he usually stated quite frankly that he didn't like the language as it was and had written his grammar to reform it. Today many a grammar states in its preface that it will describe the language of cultivated writers while it actually reproduces with only minor revision the prescriptive grammar of the eighteenth century.

I have attempted to trace briefly the Western grammatical tradition from its origin down to our own day with some interpretive comments intended to show that the use to which grammar has been put in the last several hundred years is one which its originators never dreamed of and one which has had some rather unhappy results. I should like to add a word more about this intellectual and social phenomenon which has had such an effect on Western culture.

Dionysius Thrax's little *technē*, as he named it, has been called the most influential book in the Western culture after the Bible.¹² In it are to be found virtually all the standard grammatical terms, and the classifications which he presented remain those of all standard grammar books. Yet his little book represents the latest and one of the least of Greek intellectual achievements. Still it might have been otherwise if the Greeks had not been so certain that they had nothing to learn from another culture. Alexander the Great introduced them to India, where one of the most penetrating schools of descriptive grammar had culminated nearly a century earlier in the work of Panini (c. 400 B.C.) But grammatical analysis like all other Greek intellectual achievements was to be a purely native development, and perhaps because it came as a sort of after-thought in the evening of the Greek mind, it is

¹¹ Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern, 1953, p. 51, note 1.

¹² Franz Susemihl, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur in der Alexandrinerzeit*, Leipzig, Vol. 2, 1892, p. 172.

a lesser accomplishment, legitimately ignored in our usual study of Greek thought. From this already modest achievement the Romans derived their even less original grammar of Latin, which was in no way improved during the Middle Ages by being mixed with a large portion of philosophy.¹⁸ Finally this inadequate framework was used to describe the Modern European vernaculars and proved a very incomplete and distorting basis for our modern grammars. You may feel that these are hard words, that though there may be weaknesses in our traditional grammars, on the whole what they describe is recognizable in the language itself. It is, of course. Greek and English are both Indo-European languages and will therefore have a great deal in common, especially when compared to a non-Indo-European tongue. To this extent a common grammatical pattern will do to describe both languages. But Greek is quite incomprehensible to one who knows only English; the languages as living media of communication are very different. A comprehensively descriptive grammar will be as much concerned with the differences as with the similarities, and it is in describing these differences that classical grammar fails, as I think the structuralists have conclusively demonstrated. It is also true that a foreign language can be learned after a fashion through the medium of modern adaptations of classical grammar, as all of you know from experience, generally sad. It does work after a fashion, as did also the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. But what we master of a foreign language through such a grammar is a very creaky and inflexible structure indeed.

This, then, is what has happened. Western grammar starts as a phase of Greek intellectual exploration. It is a late

phase, a part of the dusky Hellenistic afterglow, and is inadequate even as an analysis of Greek. Its adaptation to Latin weakens it, it is confused with philosophy in its transmission to modern Europe, and for us it finally becomes the basis for a rigidly prescriptive treatment of English. This astonishing transformation of a speculative intellectual exercise into an almost universally accepted pedagogical device came about because of the enormous prestige of the classical tradition, the great age of that tradition, and the almost complete ignorance until very recently of what we now call linguistics. Grammar became so integral a part of Western educational practice that a faith in it was acquired with the education itself. It is hardly strange that as part of our educational experience we should all have acquired an implicit faith in grammar just as all our ancestors a few centuries ago accepted the Ptolemaic description of the sun revolving about the earth. The Ptolemaic hypothesis, not much younger than Greek grammar and a product of the same Hellenistic culture, maintained its hold on Western thought for much the same reasons that Western grammar still does.

It is necessary for the perpetuation of our culture that we accept the traditional unless and until it is proved useless or invalid. I have tried to suggest that there is in the history of the Western grammatical tradition itself much that will bring into question both the utility and validity of classical grammar as an approach to language. Through no fault of its devisers, it has created a state of confusion in many of us not unlike that of that Rat in Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*:

The Toad, having finished his breakfast, picked up a stout stick and swung it vigorously, belaboring imaginary animals. "I'll learn 'em to steal my house!" he cried. "I'll learn 'em, I'll learn 'em!"

"Don't say learn 'em, Toad," said the Rat

¹⁸ R. H. Robins, *Ancient and Medieval Grammatical Theory in Europe . . .*, London, 1951, ch. III.

greatly shocked. "It's not good English."

"What are you always nagging at Toad for?" inquired the Badger peevishly. "What's the matter with his English? It's the same what I use myself, and if it's good enough for me, it ought to be good enough for you!"

"I'm very sorry," said the Rat humbly. "Only I think it ought to be 'teach' 'em, not learn 'em."

"But we don't want to teach 'em," replied the Badger. "We want to learn 'em—learn 'em, learn 'em! and what's more, we're going

to do it, too!"

"Oh, very well, have it your own way," said the Rat. He was getting rather muddled about it himself, and presently he retired into a corner, where he could be heard muttering, "Learn 'em, teach 'em, teach 'em, learn 'em!" till the Badger told him rather sharply to leave off.¹⁴

I hope when all eight of us are through with you, you will not depart with comparable incoherent mutterings.

¹⁴ Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*, London, 1908, Ch. XI.

Historical Development of the Concept of Rhetorical Proprieties¹

J. E. CONGLETON²

Rhetoricians—from the very beginning, it seems—have often found themselves divided into two camps. One group has been primarily concerned with the truth of the message, the other with the effectiveness of the speech (or composition).

In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle attacks the contemporary authors of the *Arts of Speaking*. Having asserted that rhetoric has to do with "such things as fall within the realm of common knowledge," he accuses them of being concerned "in the main with matters external to the direct issue." Then he points out that "the arousing of prejudice, of pity, of anger, and the like feelings in the soul does not concern the facts, but has regard to those who decide." He concludes the attack by saying that

our authors of handbooks, in attempting to define the proper content of the proem, the narration, and the other divisions of the speech, and the like, are dwelling upon ir-

relevant matters, for their rules have to do, simply and solely, with the production of a certain mental attitude in the judge.

Aristotle, himself, taught a theory of public speaking that combined the sophistic intricacy of technique with an emphasis on the functions of rhetoric as a triumphant vehicle of truth. In short, it seems that he considered rhetoric as a branch of the science of man. Since a discourse has its end in persuasion, Aristotle argues, the speaker or writer must know the nature of the human soul. Perhaps Lane Cooper, after all, is not too lavish in his praise when he declares that "Aristotle's treatise on Rhetoric is one of the world's best and wisest books."

The object of Cicero in *De Oratore* was to set before the reader all that was important in the rhetorical treatises of Aristotle, Isocrates, and other ancient writers on oratory, divested of technicalities and presented in a pleasing form. In his treatise Cicero, therefore, introduces the same issue Aristotle had dealt with. Crassus, who in the dialogue is the mouthpiece of Cicero's own opinions,

¹ A paper given at the CCCC Spring Meeting, 1954, in St. Louis, Missouri, as part of a panel discussion on the general subject, "Modern Linguistics and the Teaching of Freshman English."

² University of Florida.

maintains that a complete orator must be acquainted with the whole circle of arts and sciences. Antonius disagrees: he argues that the orator, in order to work on the emotions, needs shrewdness, experience, and knowledge of the world, but not philosophy. Some effective lines of argument, he points out, might be disapproved of by philosophers. And knowledge of law is unnecessary; it is eloquence that wins cases, and on hard points of law even experts disagree.

During the period following Cicero, the Roman rhetoricians emphasized verbal embellishments, contriving technical names for scores of devices, figures of thought, and tricks of phrase. Against this decadent tendency Quintilian argued at length in his *Institutio Oratoria*. Quintilian pointed out, and no doubt agreed with, Aristotle's principle that it is not required of the orator to win his case. Concluding his patient research on the definition of rhetoric, Quintilian will say only that "rhetoric is the science of speaking well." And, if one may judge from the program Quintilian recommends for the training of an orator, or from his insight into the problems of teaching, one must concede that Quintilian thought that the study of rhetoric was profound and far-reaching.

In the Renaissance, Peter Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée) was perhaps one of the most influential writers on the subject. During this time the reaction against scholasticism was at full tide, and Ramus outdid his predecessors in the impetuosity of his revolt. For his dissertation he actually took the subject "Everything that Aristotle wrote is false." In 1544 he was interdicted on the grounds of undermining the foundations of philosophy and religion. In 1561 he became a Protestant and was compelled to leave the city, but returned in time to be killed in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.

Ramus thought that rhetoric should be concerned only with ornamenting ideas given by logic and correctly expressed with the aid of grammar. Rhetoric, thus left only with the parts of communication concerned with style and delivery, became the art of using "daintie words and comely deliverance." He epitomizes a period of decadence, which stressed only the trope and figure and ignored the active elements which Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian had considered the very heart of rhetoric. Speaking of some of the poetry produced during this period, Jusserand says, "leur art de bien dire devient . . . un art de rien dire." Such rhetoric, shortly thereafter, is what provoked Samuel Butler's celebrated attack in *Hudibras*, 1663. Speaking of the titular hero, Butler says:

For rhetoric, he could not ope
His mouth but out there flew a trope;
And when he happened to break off
I' th' middle of his speech, or cough,
H' had hard words ready to show why,
And tell what rules he did it by;
Else, when the greatest art he spoke,
You'd think he talked like other folk;
For all a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name his tools.

Perhaps the next major era of rhetoric in England is found in the Eighteenth Century, dominated by such men as Hugh Blair and George Campbell. Though the rhetoricians of this period were eclectic, though they were disproportionately interested in style and taste, and though they have been accused of mouthing their sham rhetoric, they restored the classical foundation of the art by pointing out that a speech may have other aims than to persuade, that logic is a tool rather than the foundation of rhetoric, and that rhetoric is highly useful and closely connected with the understanding and the will. The breadth of their conception of rhetoric is suggested by Blair's title, *Rhetoric And Belles Lettres*, 1783. In fact literary criticism all but merged with rhetoric during this

period. According to Professor Crane, literary criticism constituted, from the beginning of the period to the end, a distinct and fairly consistent school, which can be characterized most simply by saying that its basic historical affinities were Roman rather than Greek, that its favorite masters were Horace rather than Aristotle (for all its many debts to the *Poetics*) and Quintilian rather than Longinus (for all the enthusiasm for the treatise *On the Sublime*), and that its typical devices of analysis and evaluation owed more to the example of rhetoric . . . than they did either to philosophy or to poetics

And Pope himself offers a clear bit of evidence when he says,

In grave Quintilian's copious work we find
The justest rules and the clearest method
joined.

In early America, that is before 1730, classical rhetoric had little or no influence. There is only slight evidence that Aristotle was used at all; Cicero fared but little better; and there is almost no trace of Quintilian. Peter Ramus was the rhetorician of the day. His books were imported through Boston and, for that time, widely sold. After 1730, however, there was a rapid turn to the classical tradition, and the importation and sale of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian increased. Later in the century, about 1785, the use of Blair, Campbell, and Whately introduced the *belles-lettres* trend in America. A mighty furore was stirred up against elocution, and colleges trying to eschew all that was adventitious in the tradition transformed rhetoric into composition. In 1830 Harvard introduced a course for sophomores called "English Composition"; in 1838, North Carolina changed the course from "Rhetoric and Logic" to "Rhetoric and Belles Lettres"; in 1839, Yale changed the title of a chair from "Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory" to "Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature"; in 1847, Transylvania changed the title of a course from "Speaking and Composition" to "Composition"; in 1854, the Boyleston Lectures were on "English

Language and Literature" rather than on "Oratory and Rhetoric"; in 1855, Pennsylvania changed the title of a course from "Rhetoric and English Literature" to "Belles Lettres and English Literature."

Such an attitude and approach must have formed the mind of young John Franklin Genung. In his *Working Principles of Rhetoric*, 1900—a volume which some of us are not too young to remember—one sees a rhetoric modified by *belles lettres* and applied primarily to writing.

After such a brief survey, it should prove helpful to look more narrowly at some particular developments. First, then, at elocution—even more specifically at training in the art of gestures.

Ever since the time of Cicero there had been five divisions of rhetoric—*inventio* (discovery), *dispositio* (arrangement), *elocutio* (expression), *memoria* (memory), and *pronuntiatio* (voice, posture, and gestures). Most books on rhetoric follow these divisions, but as early as 1644, John Bulwer was showing a disproportionate interest in *pronuntiatio* (gestures). His two books (published in the period that evoked Butler's caustic remarks) are called *Chirologia* (or the "Natural Language of the Hand") and *Chironomia* (or the "Art of Manual Rhetoric"). They contain sixty-four canons and thirty-two cautions. Here is "Canon XVII":

The Hand brought to the stomacke, and spread gently thereon, is a gesture of Rhetorickall asseveration.

And here is "Caution XII":

No gesture that respects the rule of Art, directs it selfe to the hinder parts; yet otherwhiles the Hand being as it were cast backe, is free from this prohibition: for whereas there are seven parts of motion, To the Right Hand, To the left, upwards, down-

wards, forward, backward, and circular, the first five are only allowed a Rhetorician.

Under the broadening force of the *belles lettristic* influence, between 1730 and 1785, *pronuntiatio* splintered off and became a subject all unto itself—elocution. As early as 1748, John Mason published his *Essays on Elocution*. The most famous book of this type in this period, no doubt, is Thomas Sheridan's celebrated *Course of Lectures on Elocution*, 1763. Less famous but more specific in its directions is William Scott's *Lessons in Elocution*, 1779. Listen to this remarkable passage from it:

If the pupil's knees are not well formed or incline inwards, he must be taught to keep his legs at as great a distance as possible, and to incline his body so much to that side on which the arm is extended, as to oblige him to rest the opposite leg upon the toe; and this will in a great measure hide the defect of his make

At first it may not be improper for the teacher, after placing the pupil in the position, to stand some distance, exactly opposite to him in the same position, the right and left sides only reversed; while the student is speaking to show him, by example, the action he is to make use of.

For another look close in at the rhetorical tradition, take a quick glance at *inventio*. The classical rhetoricians showed great concern for this element of speaking. Though Aristotle has no separate section devoted to such a topic, he clearly implies that the contents of the speech is of greatest importance, and does devote one section to a discussion of types of arguments suitable for various situations. Cicero is explicit, declaring that an orator "must first hit upon what he has to say." During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the truth and validity of the message was often minimized. But with the rapid return to the classical tradition, invention received major emphasis. As early as 1759, John Ward in his *System of Oratory*, defined oratory as "the art of speaking well on any subject, in order to persuade . . . The

subject of oratory is everything." George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1776, influenced by Locke, enlarged *inventio*. According to Mr. Guthrie, "This attempt to relate this contemporary thought with classical rhetorical doctrine is one of the most significant contributions to rhetorical development, and offers to rhetoric its soundest opportunity for change and improvement."

This attitude was soon reflected in America. John Witherspoon, writing on the subject of invention in 1810, says:

Invention. This is nothing else but finding out the sentiments by which a speaker or writer would explain what he has to propose, and the arguments by which he would enforce it . . . The very first time, indeed, that a young person begins to compose, the thing is so new to him that it is apt to appear dark and difficult, and in a manner impossible. But as soon as he becomes a little accustomed to it, he finds much more difficulty in selecting what is proper, than in inventing something that seems to be tolerable. . . . I will therefore not spend much time on invention, leaving it to the spontaneous production of capacity and experience.

Seems to me that he anticipates the point of view held by many teachers today. Compare it with this passage from what I think was one of the most delightful and wisest papers ever read before this Conference—Miss Carrie E. Stanley's "Motivating the Lowest Fifth," 1949:

Yet once a student, whatever his shortcomings, comes to realize that what is his to write about is of genuine interest to his reader, the teacher, who has been watching along—perhaps sentence by sentence—he gradually begins to find a new interest, a new respect for himself. Even the inarticulate one who in the beginning stoutly holds that all he wants is just to say it straight with no fancy flourishes, is ready after a while to give his thought, and so his words, direction; because gradually it has been pointed out to him, he begins to understand something of the need for both substance and form.

It is easy to prove that the *inventio* of

classical rhetoric shows up in the modern composition text as a discussion of "The Whole Composition." It is so in *A System of Rhetoric* by one C. W. Bardeen, 1884. Chapter XVII is called "Invention." The sub-heads are "The Essay Half Done," "The Moment of Action," "Repress Impatience," "Development of the Idea," "Reflection upon the Idea," "Practical Rules" (I. Address your mind to the invention of thoughts, not words), "The Plan of the Discourse," "First, a Bold Outline," "Good Sense, Sagacity, Tact," "Proportion and Harmony." It is so in Albert N. Raub's *Practical Rhetoric and Composition*, 1898. He begins Chapter I by saying: "The processes of Invention are three: 1. The Choice of A Subject; 2. The Accumulation of Materials; 3. The Arrangement of the Matter."

The conventional "Topics for Talks and Themes," now ubiquitous, therefore is a direct lineal descendant of Cicero's *inventio*. At the end of the discussion of "The Whole Composition," the authors nearly always attached a list of subjects. Some of them, however, would perhaps seem somewhat strange to us today. For instance, John S. Hart, in his *Manual of Rhetoric and Compositions*, 1885, offers a list of forty-one titles, following his discussion of "Compositions on Imaginary Subjects." Here are some of them: 1. A Letter from Old Mother Hubbard Concerning Her Dog; 2. A Day with a Mermaid Under the Sea; 3. The Chinaman's First Impression of an Italian Opera; 4. A Day With Adam and Eve in Eden; 5. What Would Be the Result, if the Nations were Suddenly to Find Themselves Speaking and Reading but *One Language*; 6. Man Endowed with the Power of Flight.

I do not read these in order to evoke a supercilious smile. And out of justice to Mr. Hart, I must add that his chapter on "Invention" (really Part II of his book) has seven divisions: (1) Compo-

sition on Objects, (2) Compositions on Transactions, (3) Compositions on Abstract Subjects, (4) Compositions on Imaginary Subjects, (5) Personal Narratives, (6) Descriptions, (7) Miscellaneous Subjects. I offer this list to show the continuity and variation of a tradition.

Which brings me to the last point. Can we use the traditional principles of rhetoric in building a stronger, more sensible course for the freshmen who are coming to our schools in ever-larger waves for the next ten years? In the superficial glance we took at a discipline that has survived (often flourished) during the last 2500 years, we saw that rhetoric like most (if not all) of the other arts passes through cycles of development, refinement, and revolt. In the "Prologue, Spoken by Mr. Garrick at the Opening of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 1747," Dr. Johnson, speaking on the verge of a pervasive period of revolt and thinking of another art (tragedy) said,

Then, crushed by rules, and weakened
as refined
For years the power of Tragedy de-
clined."

Such has more than once been true about rhetoric. For example, when a school of rhetoricians who are greatly interested in effectiveness of expression is dominant, one copies, refines, and weakens another in succession until some such art as elocution may spring tangent-like from the main tradition. When a school which is primarily interested in the truth of the message is dominant, such a movement as our present-day communications courses is likely to be popular. For instance, take Edward T. Channing, Boylston Professor of Oratory and Rhetoric at Harvard. Here is the definition of rhetoric he gave in 1856: "Rhetoric, when reduced to a system in books, is a body of rules derived from

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experience and observation, intending to all communication by language." (When the lexicographers start looking for the first use of the word *communication* to refer to an elementary college course, I wish to submit this citation.)

What is the prospect for rhetoric today? Is it likely to become the "Art of Cheating," of making the worse seem the better reason—as systematically perfected by some of the Greek Sophists and effectively practiced by certain well-known individuals at home and certain infamous groups abroad? Or will we be able to revive the great tradition and assert, with Isocrates, that "True, just and well-ordered discourse is the outward image of a good and faithful soul?"

If we are to foster a sound attitude towards rhetoric—either for speaker or for listener, either for writer or for read-

er—we must be neither unfamiliar with nor uncritical of the past. If we do not know Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian—even Blair, Campbell, Witherspoon, Bardeen, Channing, and Raub—we forfeit a rich inheritance and a wide perspective. True it is that Quintilian was thinking of the education of a Roman gentleman, and true it is that Channing was thinking in terms of training only for the bench, the forum, and the pulpit, and true it is that we must think in terms of training for many professions and trades; none the less, we can see further if we stand on their shoulders. And it is fortifying to know that we are surrounded by so noble a company of witnesses. On the other hand, if we are uncritical, we are almost certain to go off on a tangent and become eccentric objects of derision—like Sir Hudibras and the elocutionists.

Summary of Nineteenth Century Historical and Comparative Linguistics¹

JAMES B. McMILLAN²

The main developments in the study of language in our culture during the last century can be summarized, it seems to me, under three heads. Two are positive: (1) a drastic revision of the orthodox concept of language to include such assumptions as (a) language is speech, (b) language has system, (c) language has variety, and (d) language changes; and (2) an accumulation of an enormous mass of facts about the English language and the refinement of methods for collecting and classifying facts. One is negative: there was a confusion of levels of

discourse (failure to separate linguistics and rhetoric), a confusion of description and history, and a confusion of linguistics and psychology.

Before elaborating, I wish to stipulate several definitions in the interest of clear communication. (1) A language is an arbitrary system of vocal signals by means of which groups of human beings interact. This definition excludes writing, gesture, animal noises, and visual and auditory and tactile code systems, and it does not limit language to particular groups or kinds of human beings. (2) Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It is inductive, objective, tentative, and systematic; it is concerned with reportable facts, methods, and principles; it works

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by means of observations, hypotheses, experiments, postulates, and inferences; its products are descriptive verbal or algebraic statements about language. Strict linguistics does not include statements about physiology or non-verbal culture. The correlation of linguistic statements with statements about non-verbal culture belongs in a discipline which has been called metalinguistics or exolinguistics. (3) Philology is the study of written documents (usually belletristic writings) to determine authorship, authenticity, provenience, dating, or meaning. Philology may use linguistic statements, just as it may use paleographic, bibliographic, astrological, and archaeological statements, but philology as here used is not co-extensive with linguistics. (4) Rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing effectively. It may be the practical art of communication (with experimental tests) or the fine art of speaking or writing with aesthetic effects. Rhetoric may include and use linguistic statements. But these statements come from workers in separate disciplines and must be authenticated by different means (although it is common for one person to work as an expert in more than one discipline).

In addition to stipulating definitions, I would insist that to talk sense we must discriminate levels of discourse, just as we discriminate physics, chemistry, and biology, or as we discriminate novels, prose fiction, and prose. In the hierarchy philology and rhetoric may be considered above linguistics, since they include bigger units of phenomena, just as biology may be considered above chemistry. Or, to put it differently, linguistics is more basic than rhetoric in the sense that chemistry is more basic than biology.

For example, the sentence *It ain't his!* may be examined by a rhetorician for its communicability, its appropriateness, or its aesthetic effect. He may ask the linguist for a full statement about the

utterance, and the linguist can find and report many facts about the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicography involved (in terms of the same and other utterances by the same speaker or other speakers), but the linguist cannot on *linguistic grounds* make philological or rhetorical statements or judgments about a locution. Just as a physician can ask a pharmacist whether a certain powder can be dissolved in water, so can the rhetorician ask the linguist about the intraverbal characteristics of *It ain't his!*; but just as the pharmacist would not venture an opinion on whether the powder would be good for a patient, so the linguist has no right as a linguist to say that the locution is good or bad. Sometimes, of course, the physician is his own pharmacist, and very frequently the rhetorician is his own linguist, but the levels of operation and discourse need not be blurred by this overlapping. In considering the contributions of the nineteenth century, we must remember that science operates through specializations, compartments, and hierarchies.

Now to look specifically at what language study in the last century was and what it contributed to us as teachers. The study of language was made a science in the nineteenth century. The development of this science has been related by Pedersen, and it was codified by Hermann Paul in his *Principien der Sprachgeschichte* (1880), which was translated into English by H. A. Strong in 1889. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, in the preface to the American edition of Paul, said, "The rapid increase of the materials for a science of language within the last few decades has acted on the one hand to repress amateurism, and on the other to check arbitrariness of method on the part of professional linguists." The method applied was that of observation,

collection, classification, hypotheses, postulates, and systematic statements. Paul, at least, saw the necessity for strict attention to the pertinent materials. He said (p. 11), "The picture of a particular condition of language is often blurred when the beholder happens to be acquainted with a language nearly related to the object of his consideration, or with an older or more recent stage of its development. The greatest care . . . is necessary to prevent the intrusion of any foreign material." The confusion of linguistic and extra-linguistic facts and the confusion of linguistics, rhetoric, and philology was not unnoticed in 1880.

The definition of language as speech (vocal signals) was explicit; Paul said (p. 433), "No philologist should ever disregard the fact that whatever is written is not language itself; that speech rendered into writing always needs to be rendered back into speech before it can be dealt with." And (p. 37) "A further source of deception is the habit of starting not from the spoken, but from the written word." Again (p. 39) "A word is not a united compound of a definite number of independent sounds, of which each can be expressed by an alphabetical sign; but it is essentially a continuous series of infinitely numerous sounds, and alphabetical symbols do no more than bring out certain characteristic points of this series in an imperfect way." Contemporary stump-speakers who decry the linguists' definition of language as speech obviously have not done their home-work in classical nineteenth century philology.

The definition of language as structured (a system) was elemental in 1880, and formal (as opposed to semantic) classification was common. Quoting Paul (p. 406): "The division into parts of speech most capable of being systematically carried out is that which starts from the mode of flexion." And

(p. 417) "The formation of a comparative and superlative may be regarded as a test for the transformation of the participle into an adjective pure and simple."

Nineteenth century scientific language study rejected the arm-chair notion of a standard norm, and recognized variety in language. Paul insisted (p. 21) that ". . . we have, strictly speaking, to differentiate as many languages as there are individuals . . . at any given moment within any given community there are as many dialects spoken as there are individuals to speak them . . . each having its own historical development." The term *idiialect* had not been coined, but the concept was there, clean and sharp.

The eighteenth-century notion of "fixing" a language was rejected in the nineteenth century. Paul said that each individual's dialect (p. 21) is ". . . in a state of perpetual change." And (p. 481) "A written language to serve any practical purpose must change with the times, just like a living dialect." Professional students of language have not just recently invented the notion that language by its nature cannot remain static; the fact was commonplace and never seriously debated in professional circles in nineteenth century philology. (The practice of textbook writers is, of course, something else; rarely did they seem aware that language was being studied.) Because value-judgments and ethnolinguistic statements were not rigidly excluded from linguistic statements, the notion that change was "corruption" lingered for many years, but the fact of change was universally recognized. Grimm, Verner, Grassmann, and other historical and comparative philologists discovered the regularity of linguistic change and, as a correlate, the regularity and system making the structure.

The first great contribution of historical and comparative study, then, was the

recognition of linguistics as a science, and the changed concept of language that scientific study produced.

The second great contribution was the great quantity of ordered and classified information about English, both past and present. We need recall merely the Oxford Dictionary, the works on phonetics of Ellis, Sweet, Sievers, and others, the grammars of Sweet, Jespersen, Luick, Poutsma, Curme, and Kruisinga, and the countless special treatises that are recorded in Kennedy's bibliography to realize the amount of data that was produced. Some of this work was written, or at least published, in the twentieth century, but most of our recording and classification was a product of nineteenth century language study. Much of the misinformation epidemic in textbooks was produced in the last century, granted, but not in the framework of professional linguistics or philology.

The third bequest of the last century was a set of handicaps. First, historical philologists simply could not divorce language from language history. Paul said (p. xlvi), "What is explained as an unhistorical and still scientific observation of language is at bottom nothing but one incompletely historical . . ." And ". . . it is the task of science not merely to determine what reciprocally corresponds in the different languages or dialects, but as far as possible to reconstruct the fundamental forms and meanings which have not come down to us." Paul and his contemporaries realized that diachronic statements must be based on full and accurate synchronic statements, but they insisted on regarding the descriptive statements as subordinate and not worth making for their own sake.

Second, the dominant workers insisted on explaining linguistic phenomena in terms of psychology. True, they gave up logic, but they merely substituted psychology. Although Paul noted that ob-

served speech is the only datum we can use without inferences, he repeatedly used such definitions as the following (p. 111): "The sentence is the linguistic expression or symbol, denoting that the combination of several ideas or groups of ideas has been effected in the mind of the speaker." Similar remarks occur on page after page of his work, but not one of his psychological explanations is actually useful in attempting to describe or account for linguistic phenomena.

The third handicap was the failure of philology to distinguish itself explicitly and formally from linguistics and from rhetoric. Probably because the same people studied language and rhetoric, and probably because the three disciplines have much overlapping terminology, confusion was deep-seated and widespread. Because a man had studied the history and structure of English and also taught people rhetoric it was perhaps inevitable that he should find it hard to keep his linguistics and his rhetoric separate. The confusion was further compounded when people brought up on an authoritarian doctrine of correctness found that they could use the terminology of linguistics and philology to phrase their *dicta* and so (perhaps unintentionally) claim undeserved sanctions. Let us consider a typical example. When a rhetorician considers a sentence like "The president knewed that the senator had broke his promise" he may want to tell the writer to change *knowed* to *knew* and *broke* to *broken*, and he has a perfect right to do so. But if he cites linguistics or the English language as his authority, he is confusing levels of discourse. The linguist knows and will report that both *knowed* and *broke* are formed normally within the structure of English, that they do not prevent communication, and that they are not structurally ambiguous. He can find the history of each form and he can relate each to other regular forms of

the same classes. If we keep our levels of discourse straight, there is no reason derived from English grammar to object to these locutions. But if the rhetorician tries correlating *knowed* (pret.) and *broke* (past ptc.) with non-linguistic phenomena (such as the education and socio-economic status of people who use and who do not use the forms), he will certainly find reasons to advise the writer. These reasons are based on metalinguistic (or exolinguistic or ethnolinguistic) facts that are irrelevant to linguistics.

This is as simple and easy-to-apply a

distinction as that between medicine and pharmacy, but it has profound implications, is potentially of tremendous use to the teaching of composition, and is the source of the senseless arguments between linguists and "traditionalists." When rhetoricians generally learn that linguists do not object to their conclusions but violently object to misstatements about language to justify those conclusions, both linguistics and rhetoric will profit, become mutually more agreeable, and finally throw off the handicap imposed a hundred years ago.

Grammatical Assumptions¹

SUMNER IVES²

Before discussing grammar in terms of modern linguistics, I wish to say a few words about the place of the freshman course in the general curriculum. In many universities, this course is the only formal training the student gets in any aspect of his native language; moreover, it is frequently the only course dealing with the facts of contemporary English which the prospective teacher of English is likely to take, I shall not argue this indifference to linguistic study. I mention it only to point out the peculiarly crucial place of the composition course, or its equivalent, in the general curriculum.

Thus, until there is a considerable change of mind by many department chairmen, teachers of freshman composition have a dual responsibility. First of all, they have an obligation to the students immediately in front of them. So

long as social judgments are influenced by language habits, the student should be taught those forms which will help him be favorably judged. And he should be assisted in gaining the greatest possible command of the resources in his language. At the same time, the teachers have an obligation to the language program as a whole. We cannot have better students until we get teachers who are better prepared in language matters. Every teacher who gains a sound knowledge of how his language operates will make the task of other teachers somewhat easier. But no serious change is possible without the assistance of the college composition teachers, and no serious change is likely unless they insist upon it.

The problems attendant to college composition cannot, I think, be solved satisfactorily by tinkering with the college course alone. Teaching effective use of the language is a general educational matter. It should be based on an understanding of both grammar and usage, that is, the signals of structural meaning

¹A paper given at the CCCC Spring Meeting, 1954, in St. Louis, Missouri, as part of a panel discussion on the general subject, "Modern Linguistics and the Teaching of Freshman English."

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and the choice of linguistic forms. It should also include study of the relationship between the natural world and the language code which represents it, or semantics; and it should include training in the use of language to inform, to convince, and to move, or rhetoric. But above all, the entire training in language should be based on the same premises about language, and these premises should be those which can be confirmed by reference to experience, by observation of linguistic behavior, by the application of modern scientific and logical methods to language study.

Meanwhile, since the present instruction is conducted in terms of traditional grammar, the students have some rudimentary knowledge of its classes and terms. Moreover, the textbooks available, even for college use, assume some understanding of these classes and terms. For the time being, therefore, perhaps the college teacher should modify his zeal with expediency. Whatever he knows about linguistics will assist him in making the present terminology clearer to the students, but I am undecided as to the wisdom of trying to teach a wholly different system of analysis on the college level to students who have only the current preparation.

The reformation of the language program is a gradual process. I neither expect nor advocate the sudden abolition of the traditional description of English structure. One does not throw away his crutch until he can walk alone, nor does he sell his tent until his house is built. Teachers must be trained and teaching materials must be developed. On the other hand, the greatest obstacle to using what linguists and other students of communication are finding out is the continued acceptance, without questioning or qualification, of the assumptions which underlie traditional grammar.

I am expected to talk about these as-

sumptions and how they have been upset by modern language study. They have already been attacked many times in the past 150 years, even by Jacob Grimm and Thomas Jefferson. Anyone who still believes them, who still thinks that traditional definitions actually define, must be out of contact with language study or very hard to convince indeed. If he believes after reading the recent books of Professors Fries, Myers, and Roberts, I am hardly likely to influence him here.

Before taking up some specific points, I shall read a sentence from a book on symbolic logic:

I should be glad if the philologist could make use of these contributions by a logician who advances no claim to be an expert in philology, but who feels that the state of traditional grammar is hopelessly muddled by its two-millennial ties to a logic that cannot account even for the simplest linguistic forms.³

This is not an unusual comment from logicians and mathematicians. I have, in fact, found that linguistics appeals to specialists in these fields who long ago decided that the traditional grammarian had nothing to say which they were interested in.

I shall also read from an article in the November issue of the *Journal of Communication*: "A number of carefully controlled experiments by leading educational psychologists have shown that there is almost no relation between one's score on a grammar test and his ability to write."⁴ You all know, I am sure, that many colleges have quit using standardized grammar placement tests or have ceased to take them seriously. I shall not continue this argument, for that topic belongs to Mr. Lloyd, but I suspect that the indicated failure of grammar teach-

³ Hans Reichenbach, *Elements of Symbolic Logic* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1947), Introduction.

⁴ William D. Baker, "Why Grammar Drills Are Obsolete," *The Journal of Communication*, III (1953), p. 102.

ing to help students very much in learning to write results in part from the kind of grammar which is taught.

Before going further, it is necessary to clarify the term grammar. In fact some of the contentions in some recent articles on teaching the native language have been based on irrelevancies and *non sequiturs* for lack of definitions. Unfortunately these specious arguments are sometimes accepted as pertinent and valid by friendly colleagues who have taken only the philology courses which are required for a doctorate in English literature. It is difficult to refute such arguments, for their refutation is not a matter of debate but of education, and linguistics is a field of study, not a theory or point of view.

But to return to the definition of grammar. For some time linguists have recognized that the total message of an expression in language is compounded from more than one type of meaning or meaning signal. The two basic kinds of meaning are the grammatical meaning and the lexical meaning. The Jabberwocky poems of Lewis Carroll have often been used to illustrate this distinction. For example, "Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe." This sentence conforms perfectly to English grammar; all the grammatical signals are present, and the individual elements can be parsed. Yet all the words which would be classified as nouns, adjectives, main verbs, and adverbs are syllables which have no dictionary meaning in English. It is therefore impossible to identify them by the meaning definitions of traditional grammar. The traditional grammarian who identifies them does so through his knowledge of structural signals, not through definitions based on their meaning, for they have none. In fact, I sometimes suspect that teachers and students parrot definitions and then actually rely on the same struc-

tural signals which the linguist isolates and classifies.

We can make this sentence meaningful in English by using words with dictionary meaning to replace those which have none. Thus: "Twas cold, and the noisy dogs did run and jump in the field." Or: "Twas hot, and the slimy worms did crawl and slither in the mud." The words and inflections and arrangements which remain the same in all three sentences carry the grammatical or structural meaning; those which were changed carry the lexical meaning. Structural meanings, therefore, are carried by words like *the* and *did*, by inflections like the -s on the noun subject, by suffixes like the -y on the adjective preceding it, and by arrangements like the occurrence of the verb after *did*. Structural signals are also carried by the voice. Pause, pitch, and stress add signals like separation into phrases, whether the utterance is or is not a statement, and some forms of grammatical relationship. For further illustration consider "He is coming." and "He is coming?" Stress, I shall demonstrate by still another example. Suppose you identify a young lady as a red, cross girl. She will be insulted. But she is likely to accept the same sequence of words —Red Cross girl—without resentment.

Lexical meanings are regarded as in the domain of semantics, but structural meanings are in the province of linguistics. Although the linguist has to learn a great deal about the nature of lexical meaning, he must rigidly exclude this kind of meaning from his grammatical analysis, even though some words convey both kinds of meaning, sometimes at the same time. Grammar is the study and description of the devices which convey structural meanings in a particular language. It deals with the sentence and its formal constituents. The corpus of grammatical study is complex, but its elements are finite, recurrent, and defin-

able in terms of what can be heard or seen on a page. They are relatively few, by comparison with the total word stock, but the possible combinations are many. The combinations are formed according to very definite and stable rules within each language, whether a dog is cursed or a Grecian urn is meditated upon, but these rules are different for different languages.

In constructing the grammar of a particular language, the linguist follows the usual methods of scientific investigation. He divides into classes and sub-classes according to characteristics which are stable, identifiable, and definable; but these characteristics must actually appear in the message; they must be physical signals of form, arrangement, or intonation. This procedure does not give an organization of forms, or taxonomy, exactly like that derived from abstract reason, from matching with another language, or from using less stable but perhaps more obvious criteria. Professor Fries has fruitfully compared a definition in grammar with the definition of a strike in baseball.⁵ Another parallel, of a different sort, is provided by botany. Both the pine and the oak are trees. But in the taxonomy of botany, the pine tree is in the same major class as corn and grass; whereas, the oak tree is in the same major class as the rose. My analogy is not exact, however, for language operates through agreement between form and meaning, but botany does not take into account the practical use of plants when classifying them. At the same time, this agreement between form and meaning, together with the fact that both are in the same family of languages, accounts for the resemblance between traditional grammar and attempts to describe English by the methods of modern linguistics.

⁵ C. C. Fries, *The Structure of English* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952), p. 60.

Later, I shall talk about usage, but now I wish to point out that grammar is not rhetoric, that grammar deals with one thing and rhetoric with another. Grammar is based on the public observance of certain conventions. Rhetoric is based on private activity within the limits set by these conventions. There is, however, reciprocal influence, and I doubt that one can safely ignore either in teaching the use of the native language.

Grammar, therefore, being tangible and consistent, is subject to systematic or scientific observation. The study of it is pursued only through the procedures of observation, classification, and description common to other sciences. But since linguistics deals with human behavior, it requires a methodology different from that used in, say, chemistry. I have come now to what I believe is the basic difference between the premises of traditional grammar and the premises of linguistics. Traditional grammar is rationalistic; linguistics is scientific. I am aware of the emotional reaction which many people have to the term science, but there it is. Modern linguistics is simply the application of modern methods of science and logic; traditional grammar is simply the retention of earlier methods of authority and reason. One should note, however, that this observation of formal characteristics is applicable only to aspects of language which are verifiable from the practice of native speakers, and which are consistent in the practice of native speakers. It is axiomatic that one does not make himself understood in a language until he commands its grammatical forms as well as the appropriate words.

The rationalistic basis of traditional grammar derives from the assumption that there are universal, non-linguistic concepts through which the linguistic categories of any language can be iden-

tified and defined. The late Benjamin Whorf pointed out that the same natural phenomena are signified by nouns in some languages and by verbs in others.⁶ *Lightning* and *fist*, for example, have the grammatical properties of nouns in English, but in some languages they have the grammatical properties of verbs. Even in languages as similar as English and the French, the same phenomenon may be treated as an attribute in one and as a "thing" or "nameable" in the other. English says "I am hungry" but French, of course, says *j'ai faim*, using a feminine noun. Some languages express a meaning in their form changes; others signify the same phenomenon by choice of words, that is, in their lexicon. In English we say "strike" and "beat," but in some other languages the repeated striking is signified by a change in the form of the word, by an inflection. We can, of course, say "he kept on striking," but this is not a morphological change alone, and it does not mean exactly what "he beat him" does. Many such examples could be given to show that grammar is not a property of nature, of universal laws of thought, or of a universal conceptual system. It is, instead, a property of individual languages and should be so described.

With this in mind, consider the following quotation taken from a recent article on grammar and rhetoric: "They [the old grammar and the new] do not differ very much, after all, in real essentials. And the ghost of Latin grammar, too, will always be there, since there is no other equally suitable source from which to secure a terminology and the concepts that go with it."⁷ This statement, of course, assumes identity between grammar and a universal conceptual system

and that the true grammar for this conceptual system is the statement of Latin grammar. Traditional grammar is, indeed, based on these assumptions, but anyone who ever translated one of Cicero's future infinitives knows that he needs a quite different construction in English. Statements such as the one quoted actually impede our progress in understanding language, just as furtherance of knowledge about the plant and animal kingdom was once impeded by faith in the pronouncements of Pliny the Elder and Isidore of Seville.

The next distinction between aspects of language is that between grammar and usage. Again, the line is difficult to draw but essential to clear thinking in language problems. Anyone who has had contact with varieties of the language not his own, such as travelers and graders of freshman themes, knows that all persons do not use the same structural or grammatical forms in making equivalent statements. These differences in the choice of forms are matters of usage. In totality, they constitute a difference between the grammar of one dialect and that of another, but they are differences between dialects of the same language. Individually, I think, they are best treated as specific choices between forms that mean the same but convey different social implications concerning the one speaking or writing. I am, of course, talking about such matters as the dialectal difference between "you was going" and "you were going." Nothing is gained by calling one English and the other "not English," for both obviously are English. One form is simply associated with education and the other simply is not. The only test of what forms are proper to particular dialects is examination of the dialects to see what forms commonly occur in them. This is what a linguist means by correctness based on usage. He certainly does not mean that a form found

⁶ Collected Papers on Metalinguistics (Washington: Department of State, Foreign Service Institute, 1952).

⁷ Donald Davidson, "Grammar and Rhetoric: The Teacher's Problem," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XXXIX (1953), p. 431.

in any dialect is proper for all other dialects, as some have accused him of saying.

One more point before I draw a more specific pedagogical conclusion. Our common school tradition teaches us to regard differences in usage as a hierarchical matter. We are taught "levels" of usage according to an ascending order of acceptability or correctness. It is true that if we accept the common social judgments concerning the relative prestige of individuals, we can set up hierarchies of linguistic usage, or levels of usage. For we can rank the individual grammatical forms in an order corresponding to the prestige of the people who use them. For example, Joel Chandler Harris indicates the social categories of his fictional characters by the linguistic usage he shows in their dialogue. Uncle Remus talks one way, a "poor white" farmer another, and the local squire still another. However, leaving the matter there is an over-simplification which leads to error. Within these hierarchies, and in addition to them, there are spheres of usage. Persons of equivalent position in our society use somewhat different linguistic forms and expressions on different occasions for speaking and writing. For both these hierarchies and spheres I like the term from philosophy, "universes of discourse." Speech and writing are different universes of discourse, and separate occasions for speaking and writing may constitute different universes of discourse. It should be obvious that the universes of discourse, especially when they have equivalent levels of social prestige, require usage which is more like than unlike; but a particular form is correct, or accepted as appropriate and characteristic, only in terms of a particular universe of discourse.

The pedagogical conclusion should be clear. The details of proper usage should

be ascertained by systematic observation of material from equivalent sources. The student should be taught the usages proper to universes of discourse which he will need to function in, and which he is not likely to learn about outside the school. If, for example, one writes a technical report, or a sketch for *The New Yorker*, he follows the usage and style which are appropriate. There is, however, another consideration. The identity of the person who is speaking or writing also affects the choice of form and style. People who themselves say "you was going" generally know that people who have been to school longer are expected to say "you were going." If a new doctor or minister says "you was," confidence in him is lowered. Educated people should talk like educated people, no matter who is listening or what the occasion may be.

Although I have been talking about the forms of grammar, the same criteria of proper usage apply to all aspects of language. The ability to spell and punctuate according to current conventions is essential if one wishes to hold respect in occupations which require formal education. Even the politician who receives votes because he "talks the people's language" must still see that letters from his office are correctly spelled and punctuated. Likewise, the choice of words is dependent on contemporary convention. Words must be used in senses which are expected, or at least understood, by an audience. There is a limit beyond which conservatism becomes quixotic nonsense and is just as ridiculous as capricious invention, or, for that matter, just as much a device for literary effect. Recently, realistic owners of gasoline trucks ignored some pedantry over the meanings of the prefixes *in-* and *im-* and simply labeled their trucks "flammable."

I quite agree, in fact insist, that the application of no more than what I have been talking about does not by itself con-

stitute a program for teaching the native language. Systematic study of grammar and usage will give us no more than a set of facts on which principles of effective expression can be based. Such study does not include these principles. In other words, grammar is not rhetoric but it is the foundation for rhetoric. Learning to write involves also the intellectual growth of the learner in many directions. In a sense, it is an evolutionary development of the whole man and a gradual increase of awareness of the intellectual aspects of his whole culture.

Moreover, grammar gives only part of the meaning; the rest is conveyed by words. Words often have many layers of meaning, they may change their meaning in time, and may communicate different notions to different people. We learn words through experience, in the broad sense of the term. And words acquire for us some of the emotional impact of the experience. Poets, politicians, and advertising men know this fact and make use of it. Reading enables people to extend their experience, to see the world through

other eyes and know it in terms of other concepts and attitudes, for these are implicit in language. In fact, one can argue convincingly that a man has not fully mastered his native language until he has read widely in it, particularly those writings which we call imaginative or creative. It follows, too, that increase in experience, in breadth and depth of experience, results in knowledge of more words and greater facility in the use of language. I regret, as you see, the tendency to regard linguistics and literature as separate fields with little to say to each other and in the position of rivals as teachers of composition.

I suggest, therefore, that the grammarian has a fundamental place in education. And I am using the word here in its etymological sense as foundation. Grammar is at the beginning of knowledge about the use of language, not the end, but if the beginning is not properly directed, continuation leads to blind alleys, sterile rationalizing, and the bitter frustration of English teachers.

Modern Rhetorical Doctrine and Recent Developments in Linguistics¹

W. NELSON FRANCIS²

My function here is to survey modern rhetorical doctrine, especially as it is dispensed to the college freshman, in the light of recent developments in linguistics. I must confess that I was a bit taken aback when Mr. Dykema first assigned

me this topic; I should have felt more comfortable in the area which has just been so ably covered by Mr. Ives. But since it was plain that neither Mr. Dykema nor the CCCC was in the least concerned with my comfort, I faced up to the fact that the time had come to investigate more thoroughly than I ever had before the evidence for or against certain rather sweeping charges and countercharges—not all of them either

¹ A paper given at the CCCC Spring Meeting, 1954, in St. Louis, Missouri, as part of a panel discussion on the general subject, "Modern Linguistics and the Teaching of Freshman English."

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judicious or amiable—which have been enlivening the extracurricular reading of composition teachers recently. Specifically, I set myself to examine a representative group of the freshman English rhetorics and handbooks which the publishers are currently using to pay the way of the advanced but non-lucrative texts we all have written or hope to write some day. I tried to examine them from two disparate points of view: that of the linguistic scientist, as it has been described to us by Professors Fries, McMillan, and Ives, and that of the average freshman, as I had come to know him over fifteen years of intimate association. It has been an illuminating and to some degree a chastening experience, which I have not time to describe fully here. All I can do is to present my general conclusions, occasionally illustrating or fortifying them with specific examples. Because of the special nature of my investigation and the general nature of my observations, I shall not identify the books from which I quote; to do so might create erroneous impressions and defeat my principal aim here, which is to be both judicious and amiable.

Before coming to the core of the matter, which is the impingement of linguistics on rhetoric, a few general points seem in order. One is the return to respectability of the term *rhetoric* itself, as well as of the formal discipline which it denotes. The workaday handbooks still steer clear of both—they prefer to call their subject-matter either *composition* or just plain *English*—but some of the more original books, mostly addressed to better-than-average students, flaunt the recently disreputable term in their titles, and dare to speak of “a re-emphasis upon this ancient and once pre-eminent art.” Secondly, as a medievalist I was impressed and somewhat amused by the persistence of the old *trivium* of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. These ancient disciplines still seem

to be the foundation of good writing, even though most of the books have rechristened them “correctness, clearness, and effectiveness.” Along with the renaming is likely to go a blurring of the margins between them; there are persistent attempts to apply the criteria of logic to grammar, or to treat rhetorical desiderata as grammatical necessities. Finally, especially in the books published since 1950, there is a tendency to pay lip-service to descriptive structural grammar while showing very little knowledge about it or understanding of it. A 1952 text, for instance, states in its preface, “Throughout, we have attempted to utilize the findings of linguistic scholars in recent years,” but then goes on to present a wholly traditional grammar and to make confusions between grammar as a study and grammar as behavior which a knowledge of linguistics could have prevented. This state of affairs is not universal; on the one hand, there are books which abjure any traffic with what they call “liberal” grammar; on the other, there are books which present some at least of the premises and conclusions of linguistics. I saw none which makes full use of all that linguistics might bring to a fruitful partnership with rhetoric. Just how fruitful that partnership can be we shall hear from Mr. Myers at our final session this afternoon.

At the risk of repeating what has been said here already, I should like to summarize under four heads what I believe linguistics has to offer such a partnership. First, it establishes a set of general principles. These include insistence upon the primacy of the spoken language, upon the paramount importance of usage, upon the concept of dialect, and upon the necessity of objective description and analysis based on form. Secondly, it has perfected a methodology. This comprises a body of techniques and concepts, some of them with rather forbidding

names like "complementary distribution" and "immediate constituents," which have so far been spectacularly successful in the analysis of language units of increasing complexity, from the individual speech-sound, or *phone*, through phoneme, morpheme, and word, to the sentence. Already some pioneers, like Professor Archibald Hill, are trying out this equipment in the fields of rhetoric and poetic. Third, linguistics has reached a set of conclusions about English. Although much remains to be done, and there is some disagreement over details in what *has* been done, all are agreed on the fundamental fact that modern English conveys its structural meanings by ringing the changes on a complex combination of five factors—word order, function words, inflections, form-contrasts, and prosodic patterns of stress, pause, and pitch—and that the traditional grammar, with its inheritance from Latin grammar, does not describe accurately the way these factors work. The fourth contribution of linguistics to a partnership with rhetoric is a large and varied kit of useful tools, including general and special dictionaries, linguistic atlases, transcriptions and descriptions of dialects, histories of the language and historical grammars, and—with the help of our colleagues of the physics laboratory—records and recorders, sound-spectrographs and visible speech, even such wonders as electronic translators!

The other side of the partnership, the much greater contribution of rhetoric, can, I think, be somewhat inadequately listed under three heads. First, it presents a method, backed by a long and vigorous tradition, for systematically discussing all forms of discourse that lie between scientific demonstration (which is the domain of logic) on the one hand, and artistic or creative literature (which is the domain of poetic) on the other. In this range is found virtually all freshman

writing, indeed, most workaday writing on all levels. Secondly, in the view of some of its practitioners at least, rhetoric offers a means not only of presenting knowledge but of obtaining it as well; it is a sort of median between scientific logic and imaginative intuition. In the court of law, the legislative assembly, the committee meeting, and the press conference—anywhere, in fact, where issues must be found and decisions reached under circumstances that do not permit the objective thoroughness of science or the imaginative impracticality of art—rhetoric is the tool that must be used to reach an approximation of truth upon which action can be based. Thirdly, rhetoric offers a subdivision of the writing process into the three fields of invention, disposition, and style, each with its own body of precepts and examples. Specifically within the field of style, which is the only one of the three where linguistics is as yet competent to operate, rhetoric shows a concern for and a series of generalizations about the artistic selection and arrangement of words, figures, sentence forms, and sentence combinations.

In narrowing down and bringing into focus the precise meeting ground of rhetoric and linguistics, we find that, for the present at least, it lies within the field of style—that part of the writing process which has to do with the actual selection and disposition of words and sentences. We must further note a difference between the two arising from the fact that linguistics is a science and rhetoric an art, which means that their relationship can never be competitive; it must always be complementary. Science attempts to describe what has been and is; art strives to create what never was but may be. Much confusion in these books would have been avoided if this elementary fact had been honestly faced, clearly stated, and fully exploited. Finally, we must ob-

serve that these disciplines focus on opposite ends of the range of increasingly complex levels of organization that stretches from the speech-sound at one end to the finished discourse at the other. Linguistics is concerned with the range from speech-sound to sentence; rhetoric with the range from word to total piece. The area of overlap—the meeting ground we have been looking for—comprises the word and the sentence; it is what the linguist calls *morphology*, *lexicology*, and *syntax*, and the rhetorician *diction* and *structure*. Here is the area of common interest; here above all is where the findings of linguistics offer themselves to be put to the service of rhetoric, as science should always serve art in any well-ordered commonwealth. Thus, after a long preamble to a tale, I have at last reached my question, which can now be more precisely put, as follows: "In the teaching of diction and sentence-structure to freshmen, what use is currently being made of the findings and formulations of those branches of linguistic science which deal with the word and the sentence?"

First, the word. Here the situation, while far from ideal, is not hopeless. In general, as one might expect, the older a branch of linguistics is, the more likely is it that its methods will be understood and its conclusions accepted. Since lexicography is the oldest of the sciences that deal with language, we should expect it to be the most widely accepted, and so it is. Every one of the books I consulted accepted the standard dictionaries as reliable aids, and most of them showed an understanding of how dictionaries are made and what they are good for. Constant reference was made to dictionaries as sources of information about spelling, pronunciation, etymology, semasiology, levels of usage, and accidence. Most handbooks did not go beyond the standard college-level dictionaries, although

occasional mention was made of the *Oxford*, the *D.A.E.*, and the *Dictionary of Americanisms*. Other material which might illuminate and enliven the discussion of diction was overlooked. For instance, I remember no references except derogatory ones to dialect and no mention of such fascinating works as the *Linguistic Atlas of New England*, Kurath's *Word Geography of the Eastern United States*, or Atwood's *Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States*—works which could be used to help the student see his dialect in the light of its tradition as a dignified near-relative of the written standard he is trying to master, and perhaps even to guide him toward the occasional pungent use of dialect for rhetorical effect, in the manner of Mark Twain or Robert Frost, or Faulkner. No such counsel appears in these books. If they are to have their way, dialect must be submerged under an advancing wave of colorless correctness.

A person with even a minimum of training in linguistics cannot help being struck with one glaring omission in all these handbooks and rhetorics. This is that although they frequently deal with spelling, pronunciation, and occasionally even euphony, they make absolutely no use at all of phonetics and phonemics. Actually, of course, these fundamental linguistic tools should be taught in the grade schools and used constantly throughout the educational system. They can provide enlightenment and a solid basis for clear discussion in all areas where the sound of words is concerned, all the way, that is, from spelling to poetics and literary criticism. As it is, rhetoricians must speak vaguely, figuratively, and metaphysically about matters they could discuss clearly, concretely, and objectively with the use of simple phonetics.

With few exceptions, the rhetorics and handbooks focus most attention upon the

sentence. Here, one feels, is the crux of the matter, the key to good prose, and the most common trouble area for the freshman. To win the battle of the sentence, the rhetoricians marshal all their forces and attack with indefatigable ardor. Yet as I read most of these discussions, trying to imagine what they would seem like to someone who didn't already know what a good sentence is, I became more and more aware of increasing confusion, vagueness, inconsistency, and outright contradiction. And the reason almost always was all too plain; the foundation of grammar upon which the rhetoric was built was shaky, crumbling, and in some spots totally missing. The reason for this, in turn, was that the new grammar offered by linguistics was ignored, rejected, or at best only used to shore up the most glaring deficiencies of the old traditional grammar.

Before I proceed to illustrate this point—however inadequately because of the limitation of time—I should like to establish two premises upon which most rhetoricians seem to agree. The first is that meaningful statements about the rhetoric of the sentence must be based on a clearly understood grammatical system and terminology. As one of the most interesting of the rhetorics puts it:

A good working knowledge of grammar and syntax is essential to a mastery of the sentence . . . It is impossible to study sentence structure without knowing the principles of grammar and syntax. In no other way is it possible to understand what happens in a sentence.

Even in this apparently clear statement lurks the demon of confusion that haunts so many of these discussions. What is the student who has just been told that syntax is a branch of grammar to make of that "grammar *and* syntax"?—especially when he has also just been told that co-ordinating conjunctions must always join elements of equal rank. And what is he to think when, a few pages later, he

comes across "grammar (or syntax)"? Can syntax be at the same time a branch of grammar, of equal rank with it, and synonymous with it? This is an unpropitious beginning; the sequel is utter confusion—and that, too, in a book whose treatment of the broader aspects of rhetoric is clear, forceful, and stimulating.

My second premise is that the distinctions between the three members of the trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—must be clearly observed, and each must be allowed full sway in the area of its competence. Yet, as I have already mentioned, the tendency to avoid the old distinctions between these disciplines has caused them to be run one into another, so that what one book treats as a matter of grammatical doctrine to be learned another handles as a matter of rhetorical choice where judgment must obtain. The book I have been quoting says bluntly, "Grammar is the servant of logic"; three pages later, discussing the grammatical function of word order, it says that the English system of word order "is more a matter of custom and use than a logical system." And on the page after that it says, "The really gross errors are errors of logic—or, rather, of failure to make grammar conform to logic." I don't think such inconsistency is of much help to the student who is honestly trying to learn to write both grammatically and logically.

In the light of these premises, an impartial examination of the traditional meaning-based grammar which all but a few of the handbooks present reveals it to be so cumbersome and metaphysical that it is almost totally unsuited to serve as a foundation for meaningful statement about the rhetoric of the sentence. The art of sentence-building is the art of arranging in harmonious structures, chosen from the repertory of the established patterns of the language, the various

units and building-blocks smaller than the sentence. But when these units are loosely and subjectively defined, it becomes hard for the student even to recognize them, much less increase his skill in manipulating them. One of the better books (from the linguistic point of view) has this to say under the heading "Noun As Adjective":

Nouns frequently become adjectives simply by preceding and modifying nouns: [as in] . . . city schools, fire department. Since the idea of thing is less evident here . . . , we normally call these words adjectives. If the idea of thing is clearly evident . . . we may use the term "a noun used as an adjective."

According to this concept, before the student can know whether he has to do with an adjective or a noun, he must decide to what degree the "idea of thing" is evident. This is a judgment on which even seasoned grammarians might differ. The linguist would have the trouble of such uncertain and subjective decisions, and counsel the student to try the doubtful word out in other adjective positions or with adjective inflections. Can he say, "The department was fire"? or "This department is firer than that, and Chicago has the firest?" Clearly not, and equally clearly, then, *fire* is not an adjective but a noun adjunct. But for a truly Protean figure, consider the infinitive as presented in another handbook. This book clearly states that its classification of the parts of speech is based on function; the exact words are, "To determine what part of speech a given word is, see how the word is used in the sentence of which it is a part." Nine pages later comes the following:

An infinitive is a word which has the function of both verb and noun and which also may be employed as an adjectival or adverbial modifier.

I am irresistibly reminded of croquet as played in Wonderland.

If the constituent elements are so elusive, it is no wonder that the sentence as

described in the traditional grammar becomes an exceedingly vague and confused affair. Most of these handbooks use one or another variation of the old definition, "A sentence is a group of words expressing a single complete thought." As I read, it got to be a sort of game to see how soon after that definition appeared the trouble would start. Specifically, I looked to see how soon, if at all, an effort would be made to answer the questions that any thinking student ought to ask immediately: "What is a *thought*? and when is it *complete*?" The common answer seemed to be that a thought is a predication—which, of course, since it is only substituting a strange word for a familiar one, inevitably leads to the question, "What is a predication?" The answer is not lacking; in the words of one book, "Without a finite verb, no predication can be made; nothing can be 'said about' the subject." Leaving aside for the moment the highly questionable accuracy of the second part of that sentence, my hypothetical freshman inevitably asks, "And what is a finite verb?" And to this there seems to be no answer except "A finite verb is a verb that states a complete thought."

Someone more given to abstract speculation than the usual freshman might suspect that the reasoning here is not only circular but backward. Could it be, not that a predication is a thought because of the nature of our thinking process, but that a thought is a predication because of the nature of our grammar? So some linguists are beginning to suspect. Yet one of the most intelligent and advanced of the rhetorics I examined keeps trying to find a logical or metaphysical *reason* for using a finite verb; the result, after considerable talk about "focus," is to identify the finite verb as the "point of emphasis . . . about which the other parts of the sentence may be made to cohere so as to give us that spe-

cial kind of unity which characterizes the complete thought that is a sentence." Here all three members of the trivium have been lugged in to make a metaphysical point that hardly clarifies grammar. I much prefer the following, from a book otherwise undistinguished in its treatment of grammar:

The "rule" that a sentence must contain a subject and a predicate is really only a description of what we do, without stopping to think about it, whenever we express ideas in statements.

That is the kind of statement that makes sense not only to a linguist but to a freshman as well.

If it weren't that my time is running out—if indeed it has not already run out—I should like to take you on into the confusion caused by the words "single" and "complete" when the compound sentence comes up for treatment. As it is, I must be content with one example. One text, after stating that some persons consider the sentence-fragment and the fused sentence mere errors of punctuation, goes on to say:

But the errors of the fragmentary sentence and the error of the fused sentence are errors of unity. They violate the principle explained above: that the sentence must be a single, complete unit of thought.

So far, so good. But on the next page, in the discussion of the compound sentence, we find this:

It combines clauses of equal rank (always independent clauses) and generally clauses that express closely parallel or complementary thoughts.

The single, complete thought has become two. But what is the poor freshman to make of this statement, two pages later?

Sometimes a compound-complex sentence may seem to be a group of sentences rather than one clearly unified sentence. If it is really a group of sentences then it ought to be broken up into separate sentences.

I have read that a good many times and I am no nearer finding out what it means. I have an irreverent suspicion that it doesn't mean any more than "Punctuate a single sentence as a single sentence and a group of sentences as a group of sentences."

This is only the beginning of the "wand'ring mazes" into which the conventional grammar takes us. Is it any wonder that no clear-cut, well integrated rhetoric of the sentence can be built on such shifting sands? It seems to me that the student who is to learn to *build* sentences rather than merely *commit* them must be furnished with building blocks that will not turn to sand in his hand. I know that some of you are now asking how linguistics can do that. And I am almost irresistibly tempted to go ahead and show how this whole business of the sentence can be clarified, simplified, and pinned down by paying a little attention to a grammatical device which linguistics knows a good deal about but which the books I have been talking about neglect almost completely—that is *intonation*. But that is not my subject, it is Mr. Lloyd's, and I must not trespass. Instead, I will close with the old serial-story come-on, "Continued in our next!"

Grammar in Freshman English¹

DONALD J. LLOYD²

The previous speakers have brought us a step beyond what we are used to; they have developed the nature of linguistics and its implications for the teaching of English. We now have to consider specifically how to use a linguistic grammar in our teaching, and what to use it for. I agree with Sumner Ives that what the grammarian has to say is not the end of wisdom but a part of the beginning. How important a part I shall try to show.

We must not forget the rawness and recency of our present knowledge of English speech. I review some modern monuments: Bloomfield's *Language* (1933), a massive exposition of basic theory, Fries's *American English Grammar* (1940), Bloch and Trager's *Outline of Linguistic Analysis* (1942), Nida's *Synopsis of English Syntax* (1943), Pike's *Intonation of American English* (1945), Trager and Smith's *Outline of English Structure* (1951), and Fries's *Structure of English* (1952). This is the work of about twenty years, while English teachers generally, drunk with the wine of literary history and literary criticism, have slept like Rip van Winkle. Like Rip, we awake to find that a revolution has taken place; like Rip, we are not sure we like the looks of it. But if we accept it as a fact—as we must—we may advance boldly on the question what to do with it. I am going to try to outline a workable way to use a linguistic grammar of English for teaching reading and for teaching writing, two basic aims we all profess, being all professors.

As these studies reveal speech to us, we may conceive of it as a kind of drama with an actor and an audience, a speaker and a hearer. The hearer, as Fries has shown, is a part of the act; he is not inert. He responds. He responds to the performance of the speaker because it is such as he can perform himself, and he will, if a pause occurs long enough for him to edge into.

The central reality in language is conversation. The frequency and ease of conversation keep the members of a single speech-community sharing the same habits; on the other hand, all the barriers of distance, social groupings, and separated interests limit the conversational exchange and bring about differences in speech. Normal informal conversation is a complex dramatic performance. The speaker manipulates several communicative systems at once, to offer God's abundance of signals of meaning. Central to the performance is the linguistic system, which consists, as we now see, of a constantly changing, delicately modulated stream of sounds. In this flow the basic linguistic units are the phonemes—the vowels, semivowels, consonants, four levels of pitch, four of stress, and four kinds of complex pitch-pauses called junctures. The phonemes combine, by an architectonic as beautiful as any structure in man's work or nature's, into morphemes, and the morphemes into patterns of syntax. The phonetic, phonemic, morphemic, and syntactic strata of organization all strike the ear at once, in a total impression whose meaning is not settled until the speaker signals its end by one of the final junctures. The linguists have this structure of structures well in hand, with notations for all as-

¹ A paper given at the CCCC Spring Meeting, 1954, in St. Louis, Missouri, as part of a panel discussion on the general subject, "Modern Linguistics and the Teaching of Freshman English."

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pects of it.

Accompanying this linguistic flow of sound, the speaker manipulates at least two other systems which also have meaning for him and the hearer. One is body movement and gesture—or if you prefer a fancy word, kinesics—which we are beginning to understand as an organization of basic units, and for which we have the beginning of a system of notation. The other is a set of vocal qualifiers, five pairs of overriding modulations of the linguistic stream—named by the researchers overloudness and oversoftness or muting, drawling and clipping, rasp and openness or hollowness, breaking and whining, singing and whispering. These, as their discoverers point out, do not have encapsulated meaning; they combine with each other to convey attitudes as part of the total meaning of the whole performance.

This whole is the basic speech act—the conversation. A TV talk which we can hear but not join in is a limited abstraction—the responses of the hearers are omitted. The radio or phonograph abstracts further, giving us the linguistic part of the utterance and the vocal qualifiers, but not the movements of face and body that we usually see. With each cutting-away of a part of the whole entity, a greater burden falls upon what is left. The performer begins to fake a little, offering special tricks that stir us to imagine the signals being omitted. Art and artifice get into the act.

Writing and printing are further abstractions; they omit all but the linguistic system, and they translate this sequence of sounds emitted in time into a line of letters on the page. They omit stress, pitch, and juncture, and they introduce signals for the eye alone, such as capital letters, the spaces between words, and punctuation marks. In place of the massive mutual reinforcement of the three elements of speech—the linguistic

flow, the kinesic pantomime, and the vocal qualifiers—words and their structural arrangements work almost alone to carry the load of meaning. Written English is mnemonic in its effect: it must remind us of our speech, or we cannot read it. It is, further, a traditional system in its own right, evolved through centuries to meet the needs of the eye. Precision of grammar and vocabulary is forced on it by what it lacks; far from being superior to speech, it is relatively new and crude; it is truncated, taboo-ridden, limited in its structural resources, altogether inferior as a communicating instrument to the old, mature, flexible, endlessly reinforced, subtly modulated, complex orchestration of common talk. Managing it is an art which has brought agony to creative spirits from Caedmon's day to ours.

Most of the concerns of the English teacher, where he deals with language, are not precisely linguistic; they fall into the area which the researchers in the Department of State have called "metalinguistic"—the relation of the language to the other structured patterns of activities in our community. We have to understand the relation of speech to writing, of language to literature, of words to what is named by words. Every other system of human communication is somehow derived from speech or based on it. Hence we must begin with a thorough knowledge of linguistics; anything less will not serve us. The grammar of speech is not the grammar of writing, but it has its equivalents in writing. Becoming literate is basically the job of learning to control the written equivalents to what we say, learning to write them and learning to read them, learning what to leave out and what to put in.

The linguists have made practical use of their science in the teaching of English as a second language, doing some things that help us and some that do not.

One thing they do that does not help us is intrude meaning. They have to intrude meaning; their students begin with another language that uses different words, forms, and patterns to express a different analysis of experience. Our students already know and control our language; their manipulation of its signals and responses to the signals show an immediate, almost instinctive grasp of our meanings. We can thus revert to the classic linguistic presentation of the signals, describing them quite abstractly, getting at meaning by means of the signals, not at the signals, as traditional grammar sometimes does, by way of the meaning. One thing that the linguists do does help us: they practice patterns. They practice patterns until the student automatically speaks and hears and thinks patterns.

Our job, then, is to identify the signals of speech, find their written equivalents, and practice the two in relation to each other. We must work selectively, dealing with commonly recurrent elements, lifting them to consciousness, drilling them until they become automatic and are reduced once more below the level of consciousness. We need not bother with anomalies, differences of usage, or special cases of any kind; we deal only with the structural elements that let all of us, educated and uneducated, foreign and domestic, Northern, Eastern, and Southern, understand each other when we talk to each other. In the spirit of Poor Richard, who said, "Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves," we must teach our students to manipulate the small-change of language, the common coinage of everyday talk. It is not the words that give meaning to the sentence; it is the sentence that assigns meanings to the words in it. We approach vocabulary by way of structure.

The grammatical signals of English work unnoticed; they cradle the noun,

verb, adjective, and adverb as water supports and sustains the fish that swim in it, and a word apart from these signals is as dead as a fish in a basket. Patterns of order in the utterance, relatively settled since Middle English times, are scarcely mentioned before our own day, so quietly do they do their work. Prosodic contours of pitch, stress, and juncture that segment the utterance into meaning-groups were almost unnoticed until Pike, pondering our inability to hear and reproduce the significant tones of tone languages, turned his attention to the tonal factors of English. Inflectional endings and what Fries has called function words fall modestly in unaccented syllables, inconspicuously cementing the stressed elements of vocabulary together. The child learns all these grammatical signals at such an early age that he is not conscious of them; they precede his sense of words as words; he knows them before he has built up an extensive vocabulary. The English lexicon is not the English language; these signals are; we learn them only by experience with the language. We learn words by experience with language and the world outside language—with men, things, qualities, and actions.

The order of utterance which is grammatically significant in speech appears in writing as word-order. For the delicate signals that define meaning-groups of words we have no real equivalent in writing; modern punctuation is far too sketchy to do this job, but in most cases the word that begins the group warns us of the characteristic span of the groups. *The, this, that, some, or any* guides the eye across any number of pre-modifiers to the noun-headword of the phrase. *Can, is, do, or has* defines a group ending in some form of the verb. *Who, which, that, where, or when* following a noun tell us to take the next span of words as a modifier of this noun. A preposition

steers us forward to a noun, suppressing it within the function of the whole prepositional phrase—usually adverbial or adjectival. We reverse the usual approach to concord, and teach the student as reader and writer to take heed of what is to come, if we assume as a principle that words uttered first select the forms of words that follow. As for the function words, critics of the *Structure of English* who complain that Fries's fifteen groups are bewildering need only sort them in relation to the four great form-classes of words, to bring a good pedagogical order out of the raw order of his research. It is not hard for us to add more to the 155 words he lists; the important thing is for us to see that their recurrence is of the same pervasive kind as the recurrence of inflections and word-order patterns, and has the same effect.

If we are to work quickly and economically toward literacy in our students, we must lift these grammatical signals to consciousness, to an emphasis they do not have when we are thinking about what we are saying or writing. We must find ways of drilling the cluster of modifiers that attend the noun, regardless of particular word-items involved; we must practice substituting noun-phrase and noun-clause for the noun, verb-phrase for the verb, adjective-phrase and adjective-clause for the adjective, and adverb-phrase and adverb-clause for the adverb. And we must define and enforce by drill the conditioned substitution of the members of each form-class in the functions of each of the others—nouns as verbs, adjectives as nouns, verbs and verbals as nouns, adverbs and adjectives.

To determine usage is not the proper use of grammar. The matrix of usage is the company we keep, and as we bring our students to citizenship in the Republic of Letters, they will take on the usage of educated men and women. The proper use of grammar is to take apart the ma-

chinery of the language, exposing the signals by which meaning is conveyed in writing in relation to the signals by which meaning is conveyed in speech. We have to accept the primacy of speech; we have to face the subtlety, intricacy, and plenitude of speech-signals. High-flying students of logic, rhetoric, and literary criticism though we are, we have to get down off Pegasus and learn them. Then we have to apply our minds steadily to our problem (about which the linguists cannot as linguists give us much help), the mass education of our young people in the control, as readers and writers, of English writing.

Generally speaking, the students who come into remedial composition classes know little grammar of any kind, and both their reading and writing are inept. The students we promote directly into English 2 know very little more grammar, but their reading and writing are both more successful. I have given considerable thought to this matter. As I watch the children in the schools, it is clear that the difference begins to take shape quite early, often even before the youngsters get much English—and with little regard to whether they normally speak the grammar of educated or uneducated English. Somehow one child learns to use meaningful groups of words at an early age—even before he can tell you what individual words mean—and another does not, but moves his eyes or his pencil painfully from word to word. A good reader can reconstruct from what he reads the patterns of pitch, stress, and pause normal to English speech.

In my own practice, I build my teaching around the structures of speech. I give my freshmen five weeks of linguistic grammar, enforced by oral drill. I have them read aloud a good deal, sometimes phrase by phrase after me, sometimes in chorus. I push them into extensive outside reading of the books and

periodicals that the educated read. I teach them how to use their eyes in reading, in large jumps, rather than small, according to the patterns we have drilled. I keep them writing constantly also; I press them to explore their thoughts with their pencils, to find out what they think about what they think about. The leap that their competence takes during the term is a large one, almost as large as their feeling of confidence. And yet, as I feel my way, I regret that nothing like this comes before or after in their experience, and that there are so few other teachers trading information with me about the practical everyday conduct of this kind of class.

In a nation which is more highly educated than ever before, in which the arts—music, architecture, design, painting, sculpture, the dance—have reached real popular acceptance, we have no reason as English teachers to be proud of our work. Literature and drama languish; we have fewer readers of books, fewer bookstores, fewer libraries in proportion to our numbers than any western nation. We are uncomprehending readers and unwilling writers. Now it is easy

to scatter the blame like seed on the wind, on sports, radio, TV, the movies, and the colleges of education, but let us take a portion to ourselves. The nation learns its English from college departments of English; we teach all the English that teachers of English in all the schools get. We have not understood our language nor how to teach it.

What you think the language is determines how you teach it. Today, an adequate, workable description of English is a commonplace in every department of Linguistics in the country. Whenever we take it into the classroom and base our teaching on it, our subject glows with light and interest. We have much to learn about making the best use of it; we have teachers to educate, textbooks to write, practical procedures to work out. A respectable and self-respecting future lies ahead of us, if we resolve to ground our teaching of English on a modern scientific description, in strict and conscientious adherence to the best that is known. Grammar is a ground only, but logic, rhetoric, and stylistics not based on the most adequate grammar known hang on the empty and echoing air.

Linguistics and the Teaching of Rhetoric¹

L. M. MYERS²

Like Mr. Francis, who spoke in this area yesterday, I am more than a little surprised at my assignment. I have never thought of myself as a rhetorician. I did use to think of myself as a linguist; but since the definition of that term seems to have narrowed lately, I must confess that I am by no means sure that my creden-

tials would be accepted by the union. About the only thing left that I can call myself is a grammarian. This term also has been used in a number of different ways, and might possibly lead to confusion. In order to proceed with due scientific rigor, I must explain that I am using it in the noble and impressive sense established by Robert Browning. A grammarian is a man whose funeral will be greeted by enthusiastic popular acclaim.

But, contrary to a rather general impression, a grammarian is not necessar-

¹ A paper given at the CCCC Spring Meeting, 1954, in St. Louis, Missouri, as part of a panel discussion on the general subject, "Modern Linguistics and the Teaching of Freshman English."

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ily a man sworn to uphold the sanctity of the dative case, or to look at the language as primarily the raw material for spidery diagrams. Like the linguist, he may recognize that the language is physical, and try to work directly and accurately from the tangible evidence. And if he does this I think he may perform a small but useful function which the linguists themselves are not now performing.

Mr. Francis said yesterday that "meaningful statements about rhetoric must be based on a clearly understood grammatical system and terminology." It should be obvious by now that our "traditional grammar" is not such a system; but neither is any substitute system that the linguists have supplied. I have enormous respect for the work of C. C. Fries, which seems to me the greatest single landmark in the scientific study of our language. But there is one vital point on which I disagree with him.

Mr. Fries says that he hopes his *Structure of English* may serve as a foundation on which practical textbooks may be constructed. I do not think this is possible without a considerable adjustment because I do not think his system will ever be "clearly understood" by anybody but specialists. What we need is a grammatical system which the student as well as the professor can understand. To construct such a grammar we must gratefully use the evidence developed by the linguists; but I think we must modify one or two of the conclusions that they have derived from this evidence.

Such a grammar should be fairly restricted in scope, concerned only with those structural devices which actually and quite uniformly communicate meaning; or which actually and quite uniformly are regarded, however snobbishly, as important matters of etiquette. In making the distinction between grammar and rhetoric that Mr. Francis discussed, we

should confine the "doctrine to be learned" of grammar to the smallest reasonable scope. We will then have a firm foundation for the choices of rhetoric, where "judgment must obtain."

Mr. Francis has listed four general principles established by the linguists:

1. The primacy of the spoken language
2. The paramount importance of usage
3. The concept of dialect
4. The necessity of objective description and analysis based on form.

The second and third of these, concerned with usage and dialect, I accept whole-heartedly. The fourth I also accept as stated. But it seems to me that in his treatment of both the parts of speech and the sentence, Mr. Fries has based his description and analysis on a special and not entirely objective concept of form, rather than on form itself. I don't want to argue this point at the moment, but merely to indicate my reservation, and to say that I feel that the difficulty is connected with the linguists' tendency to give an exaggerated importance to the first principle—the primacy of the spoken language.

I agree that speech came before writing, and that it is better on the whole to write with an ear for the spoken idiom than to talk like a book. But I am a little disturbed when I find some linguists seriously arguing that only spoken English is the *real* language and dismissing any discussion of written English as being "concerned with mere graphics." I think that the admittedly secondary form is both real and important. And I think there is some tendency at present to forget or ignore two things about it.

One is that it is not merely an imperfect reflection of the spoken language. From the time that writing was established there has been a two-way influence; and from the time that printing was developed the influence of writing on speech has been very strong and not

entirely bad. If I had to make a black-or-white choice between the extreme traditionalists and even the extreme, or bird-watching, school of linguists who rejoice at every irregularity, especially if they find it ten miles further north than previously reported, I should probably side with the linguists. But there are advantages in having a language that is nearly enough a uniform spoken language to be mutually intelligible over an area of three million square miles; and there is nothing in history to indicate that such a situation could have developed if the written language had not been acting as a unifying and conservative force.

The other point I want to make about the written language is that it has certain advantages for instruction. When a student writes a paper, it is there for you both to examine, and it stays there as long as you want it to. If you point out that he has left out the main verb or placed a modifier ambiguously, he can *see* what you are talking about. If what you say is sensible, he may understand you. And if he does understand you there is a reasonable chance that what he learns may help him in his later speaking as well as writing. Of course he may get the wrong impression about which form of the language is primary, but he *will* learn something about the language—if you talk sense, leave out metaphysics, and limit your doctrine to what you can back up by evidence.

But if you try to work on the primary form of the language directly, you have a much more difficult problem. If he has a solid background in phonetics, and if you have a tape-recorder, and if both of you have plenty of time, the direct approach is no doubt the better one. It works beautifully in small graduate classes and turns out enthusiastic linguists.

But it doesn't work in English X, or

even in English 1a, and I don't think it is ever going to. For most human beings sight is the master sense—what we see seems much more real than what we hear. From a linguistic viewpoint this tendency may be most unfortunate, but we can't get away from the fact that it exists and that it usually persists even after months of conscientious instruction. I don't think society can afford to allot us the time that it would take to make a linguist of every citizen.

Yesterday Mr. Ives made the very important point that by the time we get a native freshman he already has a virtually perfect command of his *own* variety of the language. In other words, he already reacts automatically to some set of structural signals, even if he doesn't know what to call them. But his set coincides only in part with the set used in standard English, and it is our job to show him which of his habits he should modify. I simply do not understand Mr. Francis's statement that we could straighten out the whole business of the sentence by paying a little attention to *intonation*. It seems to me that our freshman's intonation patterns are the habits which require the least modification. Moreover, they are the hardest to change, or even to discuss intelligibly. If we want to give him any real help, we'd better concentrate on his habits as to word order, function words, and inflections, which may need a good deal of adjusting. And I think we can do this best by working on his written language, which he can examine at leisure and revise. And, shameful as it seems, I think we can do it best by preserving some of the framework of "traditional grammar."

We have become so used to condemning the "Latin-based eighteenth century grammars" that some of us forget that the grammar that Donatus worked out for Latin was a pretty good "objective" description and analysis based on form."

It is true that it did not consider some of the elements of form with which structural linguistics deals, but it *was* based on direct observation of physical phenomena. When Donatus said there were five cases in a typical Latin noun, he was not indulging in either metaphysics or subjective interpretation. He said there were five because he could count them—for instance, *rex*, *regis*, *regi*, *regem*, *rege*. And when he found a noun that did not have a set of varying case forms he said, simply and accurately, that it was indeclinable.

In the same way he based his division into parts of speech on form. For instance, he had a sound formal reason for separating prepositions and conjunctions. Neither of these parts of speech has any inflections of its own, but in Latin they both affect the inflections of words that follow them, and in different ways. Some prepositions govern the dative, some the accusative; some conjunctions introduce the indicative, some the subjunctive. The double classification is both accurate and useful in Latin, but in English it raises more difficulties than it solves.

Donatus based his categories on form, but he gave them names that suggested their functions. This was sensible, and caused little trouble in Latin, where form and function are closely allied. But when Lowth and Priestley and the rest tried to transfer this description to English, they were in a hopeless position. The structure of the two languages is so different, that what is simply and obviously true of Latin can be considered true of English only if we invent some remarkable metaphysics. To give just one example, we have the theory, already discussed by Mr. Francis, that "the part of speech to which a word belongs is determined by its use in the sentence." We have heard this so often that we are likely to accept it without thinking, but

it makes no more sense than it would to say that a silver hairbrush is a hammer if you use it to drive a nail—a theory that I should hate to have to argue with my wife.

But while the details of Donatus's grammar can not be successfully transferred to English, the underlying principles can. Let me give an example. If you count the forms *rex*, *regis*, *regi*, *regem*, and *rege* you find they are five, and so you say there are five cases. If you count the forms *king* and *king's* you can't find more than two, and you don't need more than two names. It's no use saying that nouns must have three cases because pronouns do, and they are both substantives. We don't say that bicycles must have three wheels because tricycles do and they are both cycles. Bicycles and tricycles are physically different, and so are nouns and pronouns. That is why we classify them as different parts of speech—an objective analysis based on form.

By following these same principles we discover that there is not much sense in saying that *anybody* is a pronoun in English because *aliquis* is a pronoun in Latin. In both its forms and its uses, *anybody* parallels the noun *body*, and does not parallel the pronoun *he*. If we call it a noun instead of a pronoun we can talk about it both more simply and more accurately. And if one of our students fails to understand what we say about it, we can point to visible evidence instead of bewailing the state of the nation.

There isn't time to go into all the details of how we can modify traditional grammar to fit the language. But I do want to show how the treatment of sentences growing out of this system avoids the kind of confusion that Mr. Francis found in the texts he referred to.

Our trouble with discussing sentences comes partly from rationalizing about "complete thoughts," but mostly from the assumption that *any legitimate* group of

words followed by a period must somehow be a sentence, regardless of its form.

Suppose we abandon the "complete thought" and all "understood" elements in one grand sweep, and define a sentence as simply a group of words containing a subject and a finite verb and making a statement not subordinated by a connective such as *when* or *while* or *if*; and define a finite verb as one which is not simply a participle or an infinitive. It then becomes quite easy to recognize a sentence. Our definitions may not be rigorous, but most of our students can understand them.

Next we admit that there are many places where sentences are not necessary—for instance in commands and answers to questions. This gets us over the difficulty of explaining that "Brown" may be a complete sentence, with both subject and predicate understood, while "That house brown" is not a complete sentence because teacher claims to be too feeble-minded to understand the predicate. We'll still have plenty of rhetorical decisions to make, but they won't be based on a grammatical quicksand.

If we work out our grammar by such a method as this, we find that many of the statements in the traditional grammars have to be modified considerably, because they do not fit the facts of contemporary English usage. And we find that many others can be discarded entirely because they were devised to handle problems that simply do not occur in English. I still remember my horrible feeling of deflation when it dawned on me that I had been wasting time for years in talking about direct and indirect objects. They were very real in my mind, and I could discuss them with confidence and authority. Moreover, I could get a very fair proportion of my students to learn to underline one of them once and the other one twice, and

it was nice to know that there was one little area in grammar where I could obtain tangible results. But I couldn't argue away the facts. Not one of my students ever understood a sentence any better for learning to make these marks; and there was no conceivable mistake that they could make by ignoring the difference. In Latin, which has separate forms for the dative and accusative cases, a knowledge of these constructions is useful. In English, which has no such separate forms, it is perfectly useless, no matter how fascinating. We might just as well teach our students to say that an adjective is strong if it comes after *a* and weak if it comes after *the*—as it is in German.

Once we have made this objective analysis based on form, our actual grammar becomes fairly simple. To learn all the inflections of English is a task on the order of learning the complete conjugation of a single Latin verb, and even our poorest native students have the major part of the task behind them. Next, the number of word-order patterns which are actually significant enough to be called a part of grammar is fairly small. The question of function words is perhaps more complicated, and is certainly harder to delimit confidently; but at least it is easier to handle if we don't cloud it with inappropriate nomenclature.

At this point it may seem to some of you that (a) I am a counter-revolutionary, and (b) I am talking on the wrong subject. My answer to (a) is that I am merely a slight deviationist; and to (b) that my few remaining minutes will give me plenty of time to cover all I know about rhetoric.

Mr. Congleton and Mr. Francis have already discussed far more ably than I could the development of the great rhetorical tradition and the contributions that it can still offer to effective teach-

ing of the language; and Mr. Francis has indicated how this tradition could be strengthened by borrowing from the work of the linguists. What I can add amounts to very little.

It seems to me that the curse of traditional rhetoric, even more than of grammar, has been a tendency to make dogmatic statements unjustified by the actual habits of society. The result has been to increase the number and difficulty of the rules that have to be memorized to such an extent that students, in despair of learning them all, select the most portable instead of the most useful. We all know the freshman who has learned that no sentence must ever begin with *and*; that *got* is an empty, or perhaps an ugly word; and that *colloquial* is a *synonym* of *illiterate*, if not of *obscene*—and who calls these odd bits of misinformation “grammar.” We also know the instructor who would have flunked Hemingway, Wolfe, or Winston Churchill for their obstinate refusal to conform to the dictates of Woolley and Scott. One of the most important results of linguistic investigation may be to sweep away this sort of dreary nonsense. The recognition of the dignity of dialect, and the concept of areas rather than of

levels of usage, both incline us to listen more sympathetically, and to think of how a sentence will affect an actual audience rather than of how well it conforms to a set of theories.

Perhaps even more important, the study of linguistics can give an instructor a kind of confidence without cocksureness that the traditional training seldom supplied. He need no longer feel that his function is merely to transmit doctrine already established by his betters. His own observations and his own reactions have a greater value and dignity, and he can disagree with “the book” without feeling either wicked or triumphant. If this seems unimportant, consider how often you have known an English instructor to mark a student down for a style that the instructor actually enjoyed, but that he felt duty-bound to suppress because it did not conform to a sort of Palmer-method standard of rhetoric that he felt obliged to advocate.

Of course he can still learn much from the great rhetorical tradition of the past; but he is in a position to approach that tradition as a free man; to accept only what conforms to the evidence as he has observed it; and then to teach from his own beliefs.

NSSC News

JEAN MALMSTROM¹

The National Society for the Study of Communication held its second Summer Conference at Estes Park, Colorado, August 21-23, 1954. Total registration, including wives and children, was sixty-five; the largest attendance at any one meeting was thirty-nine. Identified, described, and discussed as “New Ideas in Communication” were: the training of

listening skills, the study of general semantics, the importance of communication in business and industry, the need to assume responsibility for the use of language, cybernetics, group dynamics, structure of social groups, and communicative analysis.

At the conference, Donald E. Bird, Executive Secretary, disclosed the results of a recent study of the occupations of

¹ Western Michigan College of Education

NSSC members. As of August 18, there were approximately three times as many members in academic positions as in non-academic positions. Eighty-one percent of those in academic positions were college teachers, in the fields of speech, communication, English, education, radio, business, psychology, and speech pathology. The teachers of speech and speech pathology outnumbered those in all the other fields combined. Non-academic occupations included business, manufacturing, law, social work, national defense, medicine, clinical psychology, writing, and the ministry.

Discussion at two informal business meetings during the conference concerned five organizational problems:

1. *Membership.* Brigadier General Matthew H. Deichelmann, Commandant, Headquarters, Air Force ROTC, Montgomery, Alabama, was accorded honorary membership in NSSC for his "significant contribution to the betterment of human communications" through his encouragement of "education in communicative skills within the AFROTC." Other honorary memberships as of August 18 were: Colonel Eugene Myers, Office, Deputy Chief of Staff, Comptroller, Headquarters, USA, Washington, D.C.; Major Charles Estes, Federal Mediation Conciliation Service, Washington, D. C.; Mrs. Daphne Bennett, Teaching Assistant, USC; and Dr. Glen Dildine, Silver Springs, Maryland.

Suggestions were made concerning methods of encouraging and sustaining membership. It was decided to contact charter members who are no longer dues-paying members.

2. *Liaison with Other Organizations.* Kenneth Harwood, member of the NSSC Executive Council, told of his difficulties in making contact with other learned societies. Present contacts were reviewed and it was suggested that members write about NSSC for trade and professional

magazines and, when writing for other magazines, identify themselves with NSSC.

3. *Study and Research Committees.* Limitations of the present structure and function of the fifteen study and research committees were discussed. It was suggested that the committees be made smaller and temporarily concentrate on implementing their information-gathering-and-disseminating function.

4. *Consultation Teams.* The twelve consultation teams, whose function has been to provide assistance to schools, colleges, industries, and communities in organizing communication programs, were dissolved by action of the Executive Council. However, Ralph Leyden (Communication Skills Division, Stephens College), formerly in charge of the teams, will continue to function as Director, NSSC Consultation Service. When requests come to the society for consultation, they will be channeled to Mr. Leyden, who will send to the person or institution making the request the name of the NSSC member in the area best equipped to provide assistance.

5. *Local Chapters.* Informal reports were made concerning the activities of local chapters in Michigan, Denver, and Hawaii. The imminent establishing of new chapters in Montgomery, Alabama, Southern California, New York, and Washington was discussed.

In the Spring, 1954, issue of the *Journal of Communication* James I. Brown, chairman of the Reading Committee, reports the results of a comparative, matched-pair-experimental-control type study on the teachability of reading and listening. These results indicate that reading and listening are both about equally amenable to improvement.

Further analysis by the committee on data collected last year on readability

shows the advantage of obtaining scores both of difficulty and of interest for estimating readability. In addition, in checking tentatively on how comprehension, reading rate, and interest vary with variations in difficulty of material, the committee emphasizes the general usefulness of difficulty ratings in the teaching of reading.

In the Summer, 1954, *Journal of Communication*, the subcommittee on bibliography of the Committee on College Programs reports that the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, from 1920 to 1950, published two hundred articles in our field: 133 on reading, 25 on speaking, 25 on seeing, 11 on writing, and 6 on listening.

CCCC Bulletin Board

The annual spring meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication will be held at the Hotel Morrison, in Chicago, Illinois, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 24, 25, and 26, 1955. The Program Chairman is CCCC's Assistant Chairman, Irwin Griggs, of Temple University. The program-pattern is similar to that of last year: a series of workshops, with no conflicting general or panel meetings; a series of panel discussions, several sessions meeting simultaneously; and several general sessions, with no conflicts. For room reservations write direct to the Hotel Morrison. Local chairman for this spring meeting is Falk S. Johnson, University of Illinois, Navy Pier, Chicago.

During his three-year term on the CCCC Executive Committee, Donald E. Bird of Stephens College has served as liaison member with the National Society for the Study of Communication, and has written the "NSSC News" page and some of the year's-work summaries for *College Composition and Communication*. His membership on the CCCC Executive Committee ends this year, and he has already taken on another important assignment, that of Executive Secretary for the NSSC. Our sincere appreciation is hereby expressed for his past

CCCC services. As his successor as liaison representative between CCCC and NSSC, we welcome Mrs. Jean Malmstrom, Western Michigan College of Education, member of the CCCC Executive Committee, who in addition to the other duties of the position will write the "NSSC News" page for CCC.

A Bibliography on Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900, in twenty-one pages, has been published as "Special Bibliographies, No. 2," by the Bibliographical Center for Research, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado. The bibliography was prepared by Albert R. Kitzhaber, Director of Freshman-Sophomore English at the University of Kansas, and was part of his doctoral dissertation completed under the direction of Porter G. Perrin at the University of Washington. As an introduction, a brief history of "Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900" suggests the influence of Hugh Blair and George Campbell; the emphasis on rules for paragraph construction, "Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis," and the "Four Forms of Discourse"; and the development of modern courses in composition in the last fifteen years of the century. There are 323 titles in the Bibliography (with symbols indicating the library-source of the

book), classified as follows: Educational and Social Background (71 titles), Rhetoric before 1850 (33 titles), and Rhetoric after 1850 (224 titles). To take care of the costs of printing and mailing, a charge of one dollar is made for each copy.

Volume I, 1953-1954, is the first issue of a magazine entitled *New Beginnings*, containing superior writing by students in the freshman English course at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana. Twenty-five selections in thirty-seven printed pages were chosen from themes written as assignments in the composition course. The magazine has as its primary purpose "to provide the freshmen of 1954-1955 with a supplementary text containing good student writing." It was prepared under the supervision of Robert Christin, chairman of Freshman English at Notre Dame.

"Our Common Aims" was the general theme of the second annual conference on composition and literature in high school and college, held at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, on October 15 and 16, and attended by about 200 people representing high schools, junior colleges, and colleges from nearly all parts of the state. In addition to displays, visits to college English classes, and three addresses by members of the University of Kansas faculty on "Our Common Aims," "Evaluating Achievement in English," and "Introduction to Literature," there were six workshops—each meeting twice—which explored the following subjects:

1. Maintaining Standards of Good English Outside the English Courses.
2. Grammar: What Kind and How Much?
3. Reading and Grading Student Compositions.
4. Convincing Students of the Value of Literature.
5. What Literature

Should Be Read in High School? 6. Preparing Students for College English. At the end of his address on "The Evaluation of Achievement in English," E. Gordon Collister, Director of the University of Kansas Guidance Bureau, said: "On all sides we hear complaints that high school graduates do not know as much today as they used to. We have studied the results of our English placement examinations for the past five years. The mean scores on the examinations in English usage, spelling, vocabulary and reading speed for entering freshmen at K. U. have equalled or exceeded the scores in preceding years beginning with 1950 with the exception of a lower mean score in spelling for 1952. This is evidence that your efforts have not been in vain. My hat is off to you. I'm certain that after the members of our English department have an opportunity to study these results just reported, they will decide a smaller proportion of entering students will be assigned to English IA [the remedial course] next fall."

The third annual conference for high school teachers of the English Language Arts was held at Indiana University on November 12 and 13, with high school teachers and Indiana University staff members participating. Discussion groups used the following subjects: Written Communications, Remedial Reading, Speech and Theatre (dramatics, speech correction, forensics and public speaking), Radio and Television (television drama in the language arts curriculum; aids to learning: radio, recordings, and television; the ABC's of television production); Critical Service for School Publications (business problems of the yearbook and the newspaper, editorial content of the newspaper, yearbook editorial problems, production of the mimeographed paper), Literature (teaching

the short story, teaching the novel), Remedial Composition (locating, aiding, and evaluating the progress of the deficient writer), and Journalism (clinic on newspaper makeup).

The fourth Fall Conference for College Teachers of Languages and Literature in the Upper Midwest was held at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, on November 5 and 6. For English teachers there were four panel discussions on the following topics: 1. "What are the vocational opportunities for English majors and how can we acquaint majors and prospective majors with them?" 2. "What can and should freshman composition and communication do to attract good majors in languages and literature?" 3. "How can we combine historical perspective with close reading of the texts in the survey of American literature?" 4. "Contemporary American literature in

postwar Europe." Teachers from Iowa, Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Upper Michigan, and Wisconsin were in attendance.

Trial Flight is the title of a little mimeographed magazine containing well written themes by freshman students at Purdue University. Three issues, averaging about twelve pages and fifteen themes an issue, have been published: in October, 1953, in January, 1954, and in October, 1954. Publication plans call for two issues each first semester. Some of the themes included are those which reach the finals of an annual contest (\$25.00 prize) for the best set of four themes written by a first-semester freshman. The little magazine is distributed free to all freshman-composition students, and is designed to serve for discussion, motivation, and class assignments in writing.

Some of the Year's Work in College Composition and Communication

Ada M. Holmes, of the State University of New York Teachers College, Cortland, in "In Defense of Grammar," *The English Record*, Fall, 1953, writes in part: "My plea for grammar is not a plea for what is ordinarily termed 'a return to eighteenth-century language conventions,' although I must admit that much of the literary prose of the eighteenth century seems to me to surpass, in clarity and conciseness, much of the literary prose of the twentieth. My plea is for a return, in the teaching of the English language, to an orderly system of sentence analysis which will give the English teacher something to teach . . . I believe that the development of correct-

ness in the handling of sentences is a practical goal and an attainable one, and I believe that the goal can best be attained through a consistent and strongly-implemented program of grammar teaching, begun in the elementary school and continued through the secondary school years. With such a program in operation on the lower levels, much of the confusion in the college freshman English program would disappear, and our teachers' colleges would be able to guarantee what they cannot guarantee at the present time—that their graduates are thoroughly capable of teaching the grammar of the sentence . . . We could make real progress in our jobs if we would agree

among ourselves that there is a grammar of the English language, that it is teachable, that it uses a terminology no more obscure than the few substitutes that have been suggested, and that while it is not perfect (what is?) it is *the only complete system of sentence analysis available to us.*"

In "All Correctness Is Relative?" William E. Hoth (State University of New York Teachers College, Cortland) in *The English Record*, Fall, 1953, draws a distinction between students of language and teachers of language, the former working on the conceptual level, on a scientific approach that relies on description, and the latter on the applied level. The former have found that "the description of English found in most texts, the parts of speech identified, and the whole approach to grammar, based partially on lexical meaning and partially on function, are scientifically not valid. Unfortunately, at least for teachers, they have not yet produced a description of English grammar that is valid in terms of their own criteria of verification." Hence the teacher is in a dilemma, since most of the conceptual findings, on the applied level, are seemingly negative in effect; the students of language "do not present anything so detailed, so definite and so convenient as the tradition-honored body of texts, workbooks and exercises based on the authoritarian attitude. (And the informed teacher did not expect such a miracle.)" Recommended is utilizing the "levels of usage" concept—the compelling authority of a descriptive concept of correctness: "The meaning and the appropriateness, and in this sense the correctness, of any utterance are derived from the situation in which or in respect to which it is made. From this point of view, the authority arises from the situation; and through objective description of the factors operating in any given lin-

guistic situation, teacher and students can agree on the relative correctness of the utterance. The important tasks are to train the student to observe and to expand his experience with all kinds of linguistic situations."

Carl M. Selle, "Grammar and Usage: the Middle Way," *The English Record*, Winter, 1954. "I find it easy to occupy a place between traditional grammar and linguistics. Only as a zealot or as a beginner does one feel that the two exclude each other. There are many points at which grammar, usage, and linguistics lose individual identity and become inseparably the same; above all, the linguists themselves frequently state or strongly imply that grammar should be retained and even nurtured, that traditional nomenclature is often necessary. . . . Up to this moment linguistics has regrettably not given us usable details and methods that have enough weight and stature to match its general findings. It is hardly possible to gainsay this; page after page of linguistic research will leave the non-specialist almost totally without material he can actually use in the classroom. The same holds true for the fringe linguists who are overwhelmed by the desire to junk all that is traditional and to apply hugger-mugger everything that they think is new. . . . What can modern linguistics do for us? Two generalities dominate any answer. First, linguistics shows, in a very practical way, how semantics must of necessity be a part of all language instruction. . . . What I maintain is that modern 1953 language teaching is ineffective unless it uses such basic semantic elements as: fact, idea, symbol, primary experience, secondary experience, teaching by precept, meaning as definition, meaning as context, and so on. . . . Secondly, linguistics shows us

how to unite what is too often not united in latter-day education; namely, theory and practice . . . Linguistics is our greatest help here."

"The Third Camp: A Communication," by Bertram Sarason, New Haven State Teachers College, in *American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, Summer, 1953, comments on Kenneth Macrorie's writing of two camps, the course in communications and the one following the more traditional pattern (in the Summer, 1952, *AAUP Bulletin*). Both sides are said to be fairly well presented in the previous article, but the present author suggests a third camp or "school": "in the teaching of freshman English, one assumes that there are two modes of communication: one on the level of the instructor, the other on the level of the students. The assumption of the course is that the student's level needs raising, and that the instructor's level is an arbitrary norm . . . It is precisely because students communicate inaccurately and immaturely that they are given a course in freshman composition. And it is a tacit understanding among all involved that the student's level of communication is superseded by that of the instructor." The author agrees with his predecessor on the importance of reading, auditing, and speaking, but objects to students' putting themselves in other people's places in order to communicate properly and he objects also to teaching the reading of newspapers, since such specimens of prose make ever diminishing demands on the reader's mind. In other words, he believes that the Communications course as outlined by Macrorie, lacks challenge and difficulty.

William D. Baker of Michigan State College, in "Making Movies: A Chal-

lenge to Superior Students," *Journal of Communication*, Spring, 1954, describes a movie-making project carried out by five superior freshman students with his supervision and equipment. The group chose the subject, "Campus Traditions," to meet the assigned requirement that "their movie was to be of some service to students who would follow them." Concomitant research papers investigated aspects of the documentary film. "Not only the students but the instructor also profited from the film project." (JEAN MALMSTROM)

Marvin J. Barloon (Western Reserve University), "How to Teach Students to Write Clearly in Courses Other Than English," *American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, Summer, 1953. The author is a teacher of Industrial Economics, and his method, 90 per cent effective with upperclass students, can be used, he says, in any class in which language is the chief medium of communication. Stressing the importance of English as clear communication in the subject-matter fields, the author gives as his key "rigid organization." Starting point is the paragraph method: (1) a scrambled paragraph as actually written is discussed and its central message found; (2) copies of the re-organized paragraph, with transitions inserted, are distributed; (3) students now write—and rewrite if necessary—a paragraph on an assigned subject and get elaborate written comment from the instructor; (4) the assignment is repeated until students write an organizationally perfect paragraph on the first attempt; (5) a multi-paragraph paper is written, using two of the paragraphs already written, adding a beginning paragraph stating the overall message of the paper and ending with a similar concluding paragraph. The final step, of course, is the

assigning of the term papers, some of which too may need rewriting. The author concludes: "Once the students realize that they always have been and always will be learning English Composition in every course they take, outside of Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, they will apply themselves with new vigor in the Department of English. Every teacher of English to whom I have spoken about the effort I have described here has expressed the greatest pleasure and interest. The professor of English provides the student with the tools he is to use under our supervision. Let's help him keep those tools in working order. There's no jurisdictional dispute involved in the project."

In "Activities Designed to Improve Listening Skill," *Journal of Communication*, Spring, 1954, Charles E. Irvin of Michigan State College lists twelve such activities "that can be incorporated into class activities, or industrial activities, wherever speaking takes place."

1. Ask people to construct A *Code of Listening Manners*, the do's and don'ts of acceptable listening deportment.
2. Ask each person to prepare a "listening inventory" of his own strengths and weaknesses in listening.
3. Ask people to list the factors of distraction in a particular listening situation in which they find themselves.
4. Ask people to write down the central ideas of a talk. Compare their results with others and discuss the differences.
5. Conduct round-robin listening activities like the children's game "Telephone."
6. Immediately after giving an assignment or a set of instructions, ask a listener to repeat what has been said.
7. Ask several speakers to prepare a detailed set of oral instructions. Ask the

listeners to take notes as each speaker gives his instructions. Compare the listeners' notes with the speakers.'

8. Ask a speaker to prepare a short talk using at least three main points, each supported by a different kind of evidence. Test listeners on their understanding of the relation of the main points to the supporting evidence.

9. Have listeners write a paper on one of a speaker's main points, using the speaker's developmental material.

10. Have listeners note the points at which their minds strayed from the speaker.

11. Ask listeners to take notes only on the speaker's introduction and conclusion to focus attention on these important points.

12. Ask listeners to note words, phrases, or illustrations which cause emotional reaction, "danger signals in the whole process of attention and concentration." (JEAN MALMSTROM)

George R. Ranow, "Simplified Spelling in Government Publications," *American Speech*, February, 1954, in an article suggested by the latest edition of the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* (1953), traces what has happened to the 300 words that President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1906, directed should be spelled in their simplified form in government publications. The opposing arguments of three days' debate in Congress and the attitude of the Supreme Court are summarized: the result was a canceling of the presidential order. In this article details are given concerning the number of the 300 words already used in the preferred simpler form in 1906; the number listed as preferred or as second-place variants in *Webster's New International Dictionary* (only forty-nine have not appeared in the dictionary at all), and the number appear-

ing in the current government style manual. The conclusion is that what an American president and a Congress, in opposition, could not accomplish has been accomplished by dictionaries eager to reflect shifts in spelling and by printers desiring to be ahead even of the dictionaries—namely, “the adoption of simplified spellings to a much greater extent than was ever the fondest hope of Theodore Roosevelt.”

Paul B. Diederich, “Notes on Grading Essays for Writing Ability,” *The English Record*, Winter, 1954. Some of the difficulties that we can avoid in grading papers are cocksureness (best correlations thus far are only 60, for the same papers read by the same person after a year’s interval, or for the same papers read by two teachers); timidity, especially in awarding high grades; hypersensitivity—to either certain virtues or defects, and ignoring the rest of the paper; question-answering concept, i.e., students’ not answering questions exactly as the teacher expected. An A paper is interesting, has organization, makes sense in its arguments, has some deft turns of phrase, and contains no gross and obvious errors in mechanics. A C paper is interesting, in familiar and conventional language, has an obvious organization, uses no fine phrases or startling sentences, has few gross errors in mechanics—is, in short, a rather dull but respectable paper. An F paper lacks interest, never starts or goes anywhere, uses fantastic arguments, has at least five different gross errors in mechanics, arouses no interest,—“is really a disgrace to the college.” A B paper is potentially an A paper that got out of hand; a D paper is a former F paper which, upon re-reading, shows some redeeming qualities.

“Mechanical Versus Non-Mechanical

Reading Techniques for College Freshmen,” by Shirley Ullman Wedeen, Brooklyn College, in *School and Society*, April 17, 1954. One hundred and fifty Brooklyn College freshmen were divided into three groups: one group using a machine, the Reading Rate Controller; one group given training in reading without any mechanical device; and one group, as the control group, receiving no training. The aim of the experiment was: “(1) to study the effects of the Reading Rate Controller on the college student’s reading ability; (2) to compare the efficiency of this technique with one involving motivation without any instrument (the Speeded Book Reading Technique); and (3) to discover whether the average college freshman’s reading can be improved.” The conclusions were: “1. Both the mechanistic group and the non-mechanistic group produced genuine gains in reading rate and comprehension and general reading ability. 2. The Reading Rate Controller group produced greater improvement only in rate and that improvement in all other skills was equal for the two experimental groups. 3. Both the mechanistic and the non-mechanistic groups were superior to the control group. 4. Greater gains in reading rate and comprehension and general reading ability were observed as a result of training in reading. 5. Where real difference in variability existed, the tendency was for an increase in heterogeneity—a fact which indicates that training in reading tends to produce greater variability in reading.”

Israel Sweet and Kenneth E. Quier, “The Teaching of Report Writing: A Co-operative Program,” *The Journal of Engineering Education*, June, 1954. Stressing the need for the skill of communication among engineers, and as the major medium of that communication the oral or written report, this article describes the

written report problem as used and solved at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn. Known as The Research Institute Plan—"an attempt to create a professional working organization within an academic environment," with "the student viewing himself not as a 'student' but as a working engineer dealing with a job requirement"—the method requires each mechanical engineering student to take two courses: one in Mechanical Laboratory and one in Reports and Correspondence. The staff of the former are known as "Project Engineers"; of the latter, as "Editorial Staff." The students undertake investigative or developmental projects for the former, and are directed in their report writing by the latter. Details are included in this article concerning the content and methods of teaching in each course, and included also are the conclusions—all favorable—of the three groups involved, the English staff, the Mechanical Engineering staff, and the students.

"English as a Foreign Language," *The Basic College Newsletter* of Michigan State College, May, 1954:

"Programs of instruction in English as a Foreign Language in 111 American colleges and universities have been studied in a survey conducted by Dr. A. T. Cordray, Director of English as a Foreign Language in the Basic College . . .

"About half the institutions responding to the survey conduct organized programs of special English instruction for foreign students. In the majority of the rest, individual help is provided through tutoring or clinical services. A few consider it the responsibility of the student to show proficiency in English at the time of admission, and offer him no assistance in meeting American-style communication problems.

"The programs tend to be sponsored

by departments of English (on 69 campuses), modern languages (20), speech (17), and communication (3), frequently in cooperation with one another. One or two instructors are usually engaged in the program. The course is usually taught on a 3-hour basis, although programs of 10, 12, and 16 hours of course work were reported. The instruction usually covers training in the reading, writing, speaking, and aural comprehension of American English, often with additional attention to orientation to American institutions and customs, and to problems of foreign accent. Students tend to be sectioned according to proficiency in English, but not according to natural language backgrounds.

"Sixty-two institutions grant degree credit for such courses, usually toward fulfilment of requirements in English, foreign language, speech or communication. In 77 institutions, the courses are required for students whose English proficiency is found to be inadequate on the evidence of oral interviews, tests, and/or written compositions. In 55 cases, instruction is available for those who know no English.

"The choice of textbooks and instructional materials is a major problem; to supplement available publications much locally-produced material is being used, and even the Sears Roebuck Catalog is pressed into service.

"The choice of textbooks and instructional materials is a major problem, since most of the available publications tend to be too difficult for reading, too juvenile in content, or too British. Much excellent material is being produced on various campuses for local use. The English Language Sections propose to encourage wider employment of less-known publications through reviews in the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers News Letter and other publications."

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